The
ATLANTA HISTORICAL BULLETIN

Margaret Mitchell Memorial Issue

This issue of the Atlanta Historical Bulletin is a Memorial to a deceased member, Mrs. John R. Marsh, known to the world by her pen name (which was her maiden name) of Margaret Mitchell.

The officers and executive committee have decided to offer this edition to the general public because they believe that this presents an authentic picture of Margaret Mitchell, and because of their desire to see such an authentic account circulated widely.

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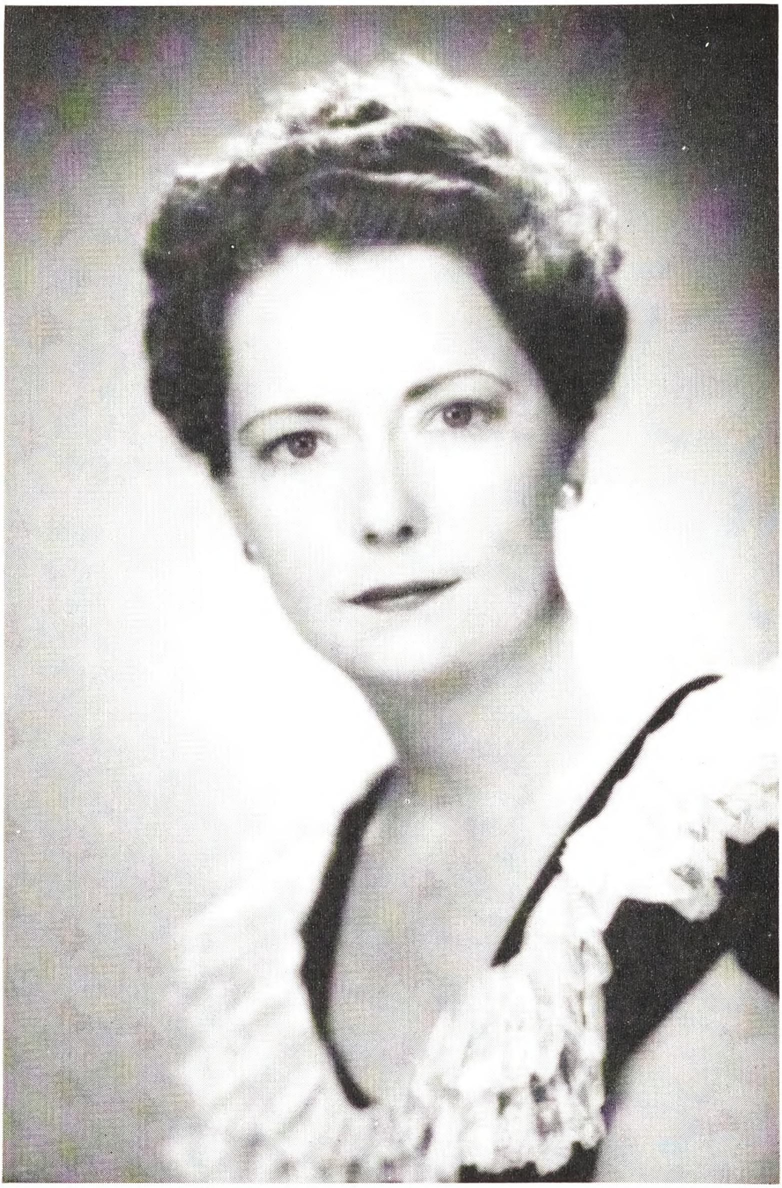


MARGARET MITCHELL MARSH
Born Atlanta, Ga., Nov. 8, 1900
Died Atlanta, Ga., Aug. 16, 1949

MARGARET MITCHELL
AND HER PEOPLE IN THE ATLANTA AREA

By STEPHENS MITCHELL

FOREWORD

In this account of Margaret Mitchell and her ancestors in the Atlanta area I have discussed her forebears in the direct line, and have avoided mention of collateral relatives except where the story demanded it.

The reason for this is that the family is very extensive, and a complete genealogy would be too lengthy for inclusion in this article. In fact, the notes left by my father and which I and Mrs. Marsh were preparing to publish, after I had brought them down to date and arranged them, will make a bulky volume.

ANCESTRY

The first Mitchell to settle in this section of Georgia was William Mitchell.

He was born December 8, 1777, at Lisborn, Edgefield County, South Carolina. He lived in Elbert (now Madison) County, Georgia, about 3 miles east of Danielsville, near Broad River. In 1834 or 1835 he moved to a farm on South River, below Flat Shoals, or Panola, in Henry, now Rockdale County, about 12 miles southeast of Decatur.

William Mitchell had sold to A. G. Moore 215 acres of land in Madison County, Georgia, on Skull Shoal Creek, adjoining the lands of Sorrell and Porterfield on December 8, 1836, and on December 15, 1836, sold 201½ acres of land in Madison County to Atkinson and Taber, being part of a 424 acre tract.

It was, probably, by virtue of these sales that he financed the purchase of the lands on South River.

He served in the army in the War of 1812. On April 11, 1813, he enlisted in Company C (Captain Crawford) 8th

U. S. Infantry. He saw service at the Battle of New Orleans, and was discharged March 6, 1815, at Camp Flournoy. (Records, Adjutant General's Office, U. S. A.).

His father, Thomas Mitchell, a surveyor by profession, had also been a soldier. In the Revolutionary War he served as a Lieutenant in the Continental Line, Georgia Brigade, and was granted land therefor (Executive Minutes EEE, pages 35, 79, 155.) Thomas Mitchell died about 1835, while on a surveying trip in Henry County, at the home of Mr. John Lowe, about 6 miles from McDonough, and is buried there. (Knight's Georgia Land Marks Vol. 1, page 680.)

William Mitchell married Eleanor Thomasson, daughter of John Thomasson, of Elbert County, Georgia, in 1800. She was born September 25, 1781, and died August 4, 1860.

William Mitchell died February 24, 1859, aged 81 years and is buried in the family graveyard near Panola. The Daughters of the War of 1812 placed a marker over his grave about 20 years ago. His wife is buried beside him.

His will is on record in the Ordinary's office at McDonough, Georgia. He was a farmer.

His son, Isaac Green Mitchell, was born May 27, 1810, at his father's home near Madison Springs in the Northeastern part of Madison County. He married Mary Anne Dudley on January 15, 1829. She was the daughter of George W. Dudley and his wife, Elizabeth Raines Dudley, of Madison County, Georgia.

Isaac Green Mitchell bought a farm about 3 miles east of Danielsville in Madison County. In 1839, he moved to Henry (now Rockdale) County, and bought a farm on Flat Shoals Road adjacent to his father's farm. Four years later he sold this farm to Ira O. McDaniel and purchased a farm 3 miles farther down on the north side of South River in DeKalb County.

He was a minister of the Methodist Protestant Church, having been ordained as an Elder on November 12, 1843. The certificate of ordination, signed in behalf of the Georgia

Annual Conference by William Griffin, President, and John Bass, Secretary, is in the possession of Mrs. Willis M. Timmons, of Atlanta, one of his granddaughters. It is said that he officiated at the first wedding in Marthasville, now Atlanta.

He served as a circuit rider until 1856 when he moved to Atlanta. His brother, Alexander Weldon Mitchell, a cotton merchant, had resided in the City since 1843. Their mother, Mrs. Eleanor Thomasson Mitchell, is listed in Williams Atlanta Directory for 1859 as residing with Alexander W. Mitchell. This was after the death of her husband.

At the northwest corner of Garnett and Forsyth streets there was a one-acre lot, measuring 200 by 200 feet at the intersection of the streets, and on it was a church of the Methodist Protestant denomination. This church had executed a mortgage, and, not being able to pay it, the mortgagee had foreclosed on the property and had sold it to Hiram Bowen. Isaac Green Mitchell purchased the property from Bowen for $2,900 and had Bowen make a deed to the Methodist Protestant Church to the portion of the lot occupied by the church building (Deed Book KK, page 515, Fulton County Records.) Mr. Mitchell erected a residence on the remaining portion of the lot fronting Garnett Street, and resided there until his death. This residence is listed in the 1859 City Directory, as is the church.

He died in December, 1881, and after services at the church next door was buried in the family lot at the old home place at Panola.

His wife, Mary Anne Dudley Mitchell, had died February 12, 1856.

There were eight children of this marriage. The fifth child was Russell Crawford Mitchell, who was the grandfather of Margaret Mitchell Marsh, the author of *Gone With the Wind.*

He was born February 27, 1837, about 3 miles east of Danielsville in Madison County, Georgia. When he was 2 years old, his father moved to the South River farm at Panola.

He attended Bowdon College in Carroll County in 1855 and 1856. Bowdon College was later absorbed by the University of Georgia System and was turned into West Georgia Junior College.

In 1857 and 1858, Mr. Mitchell taught school and began to read law. In 1858 he moved to Alto, Texas, in Cherokee County, and studied law in the office of Thomas J. Jennings, Attorney General of Texas. He stood the bar examination and was admitted to law practice on April 14, 1860, by R. A. Reese, Judge of the 9th Judicial Circuit. His license is in the possession of his daughter Aline, (Mrs. Willis M. Timmons).

He practiced law at Alto only for a short period because of the outbreak of the war. In the Spring of 1861, he enlisted in a company which a few months later was sworn in as I Company, 1st Texas Infantry, Hood's Brigade, Army of Northern Virginia.

His service record, from the office of the Adjutant General U. S. A., reads:

"Russell C. Mitchell, private, Company I, 1st Regiment Texas Infantry, Confederate States Army, enlisted July 20th, 1861, at Alto, Texas.

"Company muster roll for September and October 1862 shows that he was wounded at Sharpsburg, Maryland, September 17th, 1862, a 1st Sergeant, date of promotion not shown.

"Company muster roll for July and August 1864 shows him absent, detached as Ward Master in Hospital at Atlanta, Ga.

"He was paroled at Thomasville, Ga., May 16th, 1865.

"Description 5 feet 11 inches, hair dark, eyes dark, complexion fair."

He was in the battles of Seven Pines, Second Manassas and Sharpsburg.

At Sharpsburg he was struck twice across the head by minié balls. They cut two grooves in his skull. As a little boy, I have put my hand in those grooves.

After a long convalescence he recovered sufficient strength to act as Ward Master in the Institute Hospital in Atlanta. This was an army base hospital located at the northwest corner of Ellis and Courtland streets, N.E.

He accompanied the hospital when it went to the front in Hood's last tragic campaign in Tennessee. He was with Forrest's cavalry corps and escaped from the rout of the corps at Selma, Alabama. He surrendered at Thomasville, Georgia, on May 10, 1865.

Earlier in the war he had met and courted Deborah Margaret Sweet, of Concord, Florida (near Quincy). She was the daughter of William Charles Sweet and Mary Anne McKenzie Sweet. When the war ended he went to Concord, engaged in the cotton business, resumed his courtship and married Deborah Margaret Sweet on August 10, 1865, at Concord.

He soon removed to Atlanta and went into the lumber business with Anthony Murphy and Franklin P. Rice. He purchased a lot on the northeast corner of Boulevard and Forrest Avenue, inside of an old Confederate fort, and built a home.

In 1868 he built a new and larger house on Ivy Street about 100 feet south of Baker Street. The family resided there until 1904 when he built a new home on the Boulevard lot. He died there January 20, 1905.

Russell Crawford Mitchell was a member of City Council 1872-1877, Alderman from 1877 to 1880, and Mayor Pro tem in 1880.

In 1876 he, with Hoke Smith and W. T. Newman, ran Tilden's campaign for President in Fulton County.

He was a good business man, accumulated a comfortable estate and educated his children in a fine manner.

His wife, Deborah Margaret Sweet Mitchell, had died on June 15, 1887, and is buried on the family lot in Oakland Cemetery in Atlanta, Georgia, beside her husband.

Eugene Muse Mitchell, the father of Margaret Mitchell, was born at the home on North Boulevard and Forrest Avenue on October 13, 1866. He was the first of eleven children of that marriage.

Eugene Mitchell attended Means High School in Atlanta, and graduated at the University of Georgia in 1885, receiving both the A.B. and B.S. degrees. In 1886, he graduated at the University with the degree of LL.B. He received all three of his degrees with honors and was a member of Phi Beta Kappa.

In 1886, he began the practice of law in Atlanta with his cousin, Wellborn M. Bray, former Captain Artillery, C. S. A., and practiced with him for about one year.

He practiced by himself until 1893 when his brother, Gordon Forrest Mitchell, joined him and they established the law firm of E. M. & G. F. Mitchell. This lasted until 1919 when Eugene Mitchell's son, Stephens Mitchell, was admitted to the firm. The name has been Mitchell & Mitchell since that time.

Mr. Mitchell was an excellent practitioner in the field of Equity.

In Real Estate and Probate law, both as an advisor and as a practitioner, he attained considerable reputation.

In his youth, Mr. Mitchell served for some years as a Sergeant of Artillery in the local unit of the National Guard Artillery. He was an excellent horseman and enjoyed working with the guns.

He was an organizer of the Atlanta Bar Association (1888). After several years, the Association became inactive and he was one of the re-organizers in 1908. He was president of the Association in 1911.

He was for eleven years a director of the Young Men's

Margaret Mitchell and her father, the late Eugene M. Mitchell, prominent lawyer and former president of the Atlanta Historical Society. This was in 1936 and they are on the front porch of the Mitchell home, 1401 Peachtree.

Library Association and was its president for three years. In 1899, during his presidency, the Association secured a gift of $145,000 from Mr. Andrew Carnegie with which the library at Forsyth Street and Carnegie Way was built.

From 1905 to 1912 he was a member of the Board of Education of the City of Atlanta. In 1911 and 1912 he was its president. During the time he served on the Board, 25 schools were built or bought.

He was an organizer and charter member of the Atlanta Historical Society and served as President from 1932 to 1935.

He was a member of Atlanta Lawyers Club and of the Georgia Bar Association and belonged to various social and fraternal organizations.

He died on June 17, 1944, and is buried on the family lot at Oakland Cemetery, Atlanta, beside his wife and his children, Russell Stephens and Margaret.

On November 8, 1892, he had married Maybelle Stephens, daughter of John Stephens and Mrs. Annie Elizabeth Fitzgerald Stephens, of Atlanta. Of this marriage there were born Russell Stephens Mitchell, who died in infancy, Stephens Mitchell, and Margaret Munnerlyn Mitchell.

Mrs. Maybelle Stephens Mitchell was born at the northwest corner of Forrest Avenue and Jackson Street January 13, 1872. She grew up there and on the block bounded by Jackson, Highland Avenue and Cain Street.

Her father, John Stephens, had come to Atlanta in 1863 as a member of the 9th Georgia Infantry detailed for special accounting work at Commissary General's Headquarters by General Henry R. Jackson with provisional rank of Captain.

After the war, Mr. Stephens was in the wholesale grocery business with John Flynn under the name of Stephens & Flynn. He was Secretary and Treasurer of the street railway line (horse and mule cars) that ran out Auburn Avenue to Boulevard, north on Boulevard to Angier Springs, and back south to Auburn Avenue on Jackson Street (Parkway Drive). He owned a considerable amount of real estate in that section of the City. He died in 1896 and is buried on the family lot in Oakland Cemetery. He was born August 12, 1833, and died July 26, 1896.

In 1863 he married Annie Elizabeth Fitzgerald at the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Atlanta. See Atlanta Historical Society *Bulletin* No. 1, p. 45, (A Short History of the Parish of the Immaculate Conception with register of births and marriages).

She was born December 22, 1844, and died February 17, 1934. She was the daughter of Philip Fitzgerald, born 1798, died 1880, and Eleanor Avaline McGhan Fitzgerald (born 1818, died 1893).

Philip Fitzgerald had lived in Fayetteville, Georgia, and on his farm in Hebron District of Fayette (now Clayton) County, since 1822.

In December, 1837, he had married Eleanor McGhan, daughter of James McGhan (died 1836) and his wife Eleanor O'Reilly McGhan (died 1837) of Harris County, formerly of Morgan County.

Philip Fitzgerald died at his home in Clayton County. So did his wife. They are buried in the family lot in the town cemetery at Fayetteville, Georgia.

The old Fitzgerald farm is on the road that leads West from Highway 41, at Orrs Crossing, to the Flint River. The section is known as Bumblehook.

Mrs. Maybelle Stephens Mitchell, wife of Eugene M. Mitchell, was one of the founders of the women's suffrage movement in Atlanta and was prominent in the affairs of Sacred Heart Church. She was educated at Bellevue Convent, Quebec, and at Atlanta Female Institute. She died on January 23, 1919, in the 48th year of her life.

Margaret Mitchell, who was to become the author of *Gone With the Wind,* was born November 8, 1900, in a two-story cottage on the north side of Cain Street about 200 feet east of Jackson Street, then known as No. 296. Her grandmother, Mrs. Annie E. Stephens, owned the western half of the block bounded by Jackson Street, Cain Street, Boulevard and Highland Avenue. Her father rented the house from his mother-in-law.

In 1902, when Margaret was a baby, her father moved to the southeast corner of Jackson Street and Highland Avenue, then No. 187 Jackson Street. The next year he purchased the house and lot just south of this, No. 179 Jackson Street. It was a twelve-room, two-story house, of Victorian design, set in a lot 100 by 210 feet. The lot is now occupied by the warehouse of the National Linen Supply Company.

The street numbers above for all three houses are the numbers they had when Margaret lived there. It is impossible to give the "new" numbers, for all three houses were later destroyed and there are no present-day locations exactly corresponding with the old sites.

CHILDHOOD AND GIRLHOOD

The house at No. 179 Jackson Street, where Margaret spent her childhood, was heated by large grates. One winter afternoon when she was three or four years old, she was standing near the grate in the parlor when her dress caught fire. It was put out with difficulty.

Thereafter until she was old enough to go to school her mother dressed her in pants, as if she were a little boy. The neighbors called her "Jimmy," after a fancied resemblance to a little boy by that name in a comic by Swinnerton.

We had a cow, a pony, several ducks, a turtle, two small alligators, a collie dog, and an infinite variety of cats.

Margaret had a bicycle and took long rides on it, sometimes going as far north as Brookwood, and as far south as Grant Park.

She, as well as all of the children of the neighborhood, had roller skates and used them a great deal. I remember the fun they had when the long block on Forrest Avenue from Boulevard east to Randolph (now Glen Iris) was paved with a tile sidewalk.

Where Sears-Roebuck now stands, at Ponce de Leon and Southern Railway, there stood then a high hill. On top of this was a skating rink. Almost all of the children in our section could be found there on Saturday mornings in Summer.

At that time the Jackson Street neighborhood was an excellent one, with large lots, large houses, great oak trees and, for that time, well paved streets.

The neighborhood was called Jackson Hill. Settled in the 1850's, it had been a suburban development on the great ridge that parallels Peachtree. From its crest and under its great oaks, you could look west and see the skyline of Peachtree Street riding in the clouds.

Nice people and important people had built these homes, developed these gardens and tended these trees.

The neighborhood did not have the fame nor the eclat of Peachtree Street, but it was a solid, substantial, upper middle class neighborhood. It was full of people who were prominent in Atlanta then and who have aided in the city's progress. Among them were the families of Nora and Alexa Stirling, John M. Slaton, Jr., Harry F. Dobbs, Donald and Eugene Oberdorfer, Luther Randall, the Walter Woods, Morris and Charles Ewing, Henry H. Robinson.

In the center of our block was a large field about 500 feet long and about 150 feet wide, owned by Margaret's grandmother, Mrs. Annie E. Stephens. This was used by the children of the neighborhood for baseball games, football games, mudball battles, kite flying and pony racing. Later tennis courts were constructed there.

When Ponce de Leon ball park was first built—about 1905—the architect rejected certain great pine girders. The lumberman who owned them piled them in one end of this vacant space, intending to use them for firewood. We children used them as breastworks and barricades for mudball battles.

When I was about eight and Margaret was about three, Father bought us a small plains pony. It was the usual roan and white pied color. It had three gaits, a walk, a trot and a lope.

Margaret learned to ride by the time she was five years old and, like many small persons, rode well. She had an erect seat, good hands, rode with a long stirrup, and liked to lope down Boulevard, which was then a chert and macadam paved street. She could jump a little, but the pony was not good at the bars.

As we grew older we purchased a larger horse. He was fast and looked fine. But he was not surefooted and, in 1911, he fell on his side while Margaret was riding him. Her leg was badly injured and her face was cut.

We sold the horse, and she never owned another one.

Margaret played in the neighborhood baseball games and loved the excitement of baseball. Peculiarly enough the only incident I remember, is one where one of our kittens, still blue eyed, sat on the third base line. Margaret hit a ball that struck the kitten in the head. The kitten recovered, but one eye stayed blue while the other turned green.

The mudball battles were great sport and were engaged in in the oldest, raggedest and skimpiest clothes possible. They were unpopular with parents, but we children liked them. I remember Margaret in several of these engagements, crouching behind the big girders and passing mud balls to the larger boys in front.

There was a large pine tree in the northeast corner of the lot where we lived. Margaret learned to climb it, and she and I built a platform near the top, and had a summer tree-top home. We fixed an elevator with a basket carriage, and annoyed the kittens by pulling them up.

We had a pavilion type tent which was in frequent use, although it was hot inside. In playing war, it was a splendid general's headquarters.

Even before the middle of the block was improved with tennis courts, most of the games had ceased. We were growing up.

All of this life of Jackson Hill and Boulevard vanished in mid-May of 1917. A hot wind was blowing from the south that morning and, toward noon, it increased in intensity. About 1 or 2 P.M., a small fire broke out on Edgewood Avenue near Fort Street.

The Fire Department was worn out racing to fires. There had been a fire that morning in West End and the wind had made it a hard blaze to control. Then a fire had broken out at the Candler Warehouse. The firemen were exhausted when the alarm came in from our fire. Meanwhile it was spreading northward from building to building, carried by the wind along the Jackson Street-Boulevard Hill crest. It burned every house in its path until it reached Ponce de Leon Avenue. It destroyed an area four blocks wide and 15 blocks long and was the biggest fire in Atlanta's history. That section of Atlanta is now called the "Burned District."

In the path of the flames were our old home, and eleven houses owned by Grandmother Stephens, and Grandfather Mitchell's old house on Boulevard.

I believe our family suffered a greater loss than any other family in the City.

However, we did not live on Jackson Hill at the time of the fire. In 1908 Father had bought a lot 100 by 340 feet on the east side of Peachtree Street, 100 feet north of Seventeenth Street. In 1912 he built a house on it, and we moved there in September, 1912. It is a white Colonial house set on a heavily wooded lot.

When we moved to Peachtree Street we had no automobile. It fell to Margaret to bring the cat "Rameses" to the new home. She put him in a large stout manila bag, got on the Highland Avenue street car and got off at the Candler

Building to transfer to the Peachtree-Brookwood street car.

Rameses burst out of the bag, ran down Peachtree Street, and hid under an auto. Two kind bystanders and a policeman helped to poke him out from under the auto, place him in another bag and see Margaret and her cat safely on the Peachtree car.

When we moved to Peachtree Street, Margaret was in her twelfth year.

Peachtree Street then was fairly well built up, (with residences, not with business buildings, as it is now) and Ansley Park was being built up, though there were many vacant stretches. Peachtree and all of the other streets around it were paved with chert and macadam.

In the block across from our house—now the Pershing Point block—there was only one house on all three sides of the block. That was the Rawson residence at the northwest corner of Peachtree Street and Seventeenth Street.

That block is now packed with apartments and store buildings. Then, it was vacant land. From our house, you could look west across it and see woods running from West Peachtree Street right on to the river.

The children of the neighborhood had plenty of room in which to play. They visited up and down the street, and the Jarnagins, McCulloughs, Powers, Kirkpatricks, Bucknells, Buchanans and others were always at each other's houses.

The amusements were like those Margaret had known on Jackson Hill, except that she was older and the town was a little larger.

In summer, Mother would take her to Wrightsville Beach at Wilmington, or Atlantic Beach at Jacksonville, for a vacation. These resorts were popular with the younger crowd at that time.

Our really long vacations, both on Jackson Hill and Peachtree Street, would come when Father would take us to New

York or Boston on the Ocean Line ships out of Savannah. Once in New York, Father liked the trip up the Hudson to Albany. Margaret came to know New York, the Hudson Valley and New England in this way. Sometimes Mother would stop over in New Jersey at the "Milk Cure," somewhere near New York City, and Margaret would stay with her.

One summer she spent a month with her grand aunts, Sarah and Mary Fitzgerald, at the old Fitzgerald farm in Clayton County. I remember that she tried to pick some cotton, and did pick about fifty pounds.

On Jackson Hill Margaret had attended North Boulevard School, Forrest Avenue School and, I believe, North Avenue School. When we moved to Peachtree Street she went to Tenth Street School. When she had completed the grammar school grades she attended Woodberry's School, then located at the southwest corner of Peachtree and Pine Streets, for one year. After this, she attended Washington Seminary until she graduated in 1918.

Our intellectual fare, outside of school, was derived from Grimm's Fairy Tales, Andersen's Fairy Tales, The Chatterbox, Wide World and Strand.

Father subscribed to the daily papers, to the Outlook, and to Current Opinion. Mother subscribed to The Nineteenth Century and The Dublin Review.

As a child, Margaret's particular favorites among books were E. Nesbit's—"The Treasure Seekers," "The Phoenix and The Amulet" and "The Psammead."

Margaret took many books home from the Carnegie Library and read as much as her mother would let her.

During one period she collected series such as The Rover Boys. I told her that the plots were always the same and that the style was terrible. She said that a good plot would stand re-telling and that style did not matter, that the story was all that mattered.

A short time before her death she told me almost the same thing, saying that if you had a story to tell, you could always tell it, and that it would come through, despite any defect of style.

Our home library contained such books and sets as Hallam's "Middle Ages," Lingard's "England," Byron, Burns, Scott, Thackeray, Dickens, Lever, Lover, encyclopedias, Lives and Letters of Lee, Washington, Ben Hill, Alexander Stephens and Jefferson Davis.

Margaret went to dancing school under Professor Segadlo at Segadlo's Hall on Pine Street between the Peachtrees, (where the Club 26 is now located) ; to Miss Gipsy Morris' dancing school, just across the street, and, I think, to Misses Hudson on North Avenue. I think that she attended Professor Agostini's dancing class at the old Capital City Club (Peachtree and Ellis Streets) about 1908.

After she had graduated from Washington Seminary in 1918, she attended Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts, for one year.

When her mother died midway of her first year at college, she completed the college year, was promoted in all her courses and then came home to keep house for her father.

During World War I she was active in Army social affairs and in all of the patriotic activities of the city. The location of Camp Gordon here brought thousands of young soldiers and officers here. Margaret was then in her teens and she entered enthusiastically into social affairs given for the soldiers.

She made her debut in 1920. A picture of Margaret and other members of the Debutante Club of 1920 appears in the *Atlanta Journal* for September 26, 1920.

The Piedmont Driving Club had burned that summer and the usual Halloween dance was not given. There were several individual parties for Margaret at the Capital City Club, given by her father and her brother, and there was a reception at her home at 1401 Peachtree.

This was the custom of the debutantes of that year, according to the recollections of Mrs. Edwin Lochridge (Lethea Turman), a member of the Club.

In 1922 Margaret went to work on the *Atlanta Journal Sunday Magazine* as a reporter and feature writer under Angus Perkerson, editor.

Her lively style, her ability to tell a story pleasingly soon made her articles popular. She wrote under the name of Peggy Mitchell.

On July 4, 1925, she married John Robert Marsh, son of Mrs. Mary D. Marsh and the late M. F. Marsh. He was born in Maysville, Kentucky, and lived there and in Lexington, Kentucky, until he moved to Atlanta in 1920.

After working on the old *Atlanta Georgian*, the *Atlanta Journal,* and in the Washington office of the Associated Press, he joined the Advertising Department of the Georgia Power Company in 1924. He was made head of the Department in 1930, and continued at its head until a heart attack in December, 1945, forced him to retire.

The story of how Margaret wrote *Gone With the Wind,* struck a blow for her Southland and gained international fame, is well known and need not be included in this account of her family history.

We will merely conclude her family history by saying that, she died at Grady Hospital on August 16, 1949, and is buried at Oakland Cemetery, Atlanta. Five days earlier, on August 11, she had been struck down by a speeding automobile when she and her husband were crossing Peachtree Street at 13th Street.

She was 48 years old. She was still young, vigorous, useful and full of promise when she was needlessly taken away.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Margaret's favorite sports were swimming and horseback riding. Most of her swimming as a young girl was done at Brookhaven (Capital City Country Club). About 1920 she had to give up horseback riding.

She was in Athens, Georgia, around commencement time of that year, and while riding with a group of friends, a horse slipped and fell with her. She suffered internal injuries and thereafter could ride no more.

She wrote constantly, almost from the time when she was old enough to hold a pencil. Mother encouraged her, and she used to file her manuscripts in large white enameled bread boxes, and there were many of them.

She wrote little plays and had the children of the Ansley Park neighborhood enact them. The whole front of the first floor of the Peachtree Street home could be thrown into one room about 60 or 70 feet long, and she presented her plays there.

She was a good dancer, and attended dances at all of the clubs and at her friends' homes. During her debut year she trained for an Apache dance exhibition and did it well, but never repeated it.

She had no gift for music, and her taste in it was not highbrow. At one of the last parties she attended she was pleased when Graham Jackson remembered and played for her an old waltz of about 1912—Dream of Heaven Waltz.

She read voraciously and extensively. She liked novels and memoirs and, contrary to the usual rule, grew fonder of poetry as she grew older.

She had a talent for conversation that was remarkable.

She had a normal interest in politics. Her family had always been conservative and she was conservative.

She was not reactionary and believed in such improvements as were well tested and not too costly. She had the normal views of a person whose family had been supporters of the Stuart cause in Scotland, Federalists, Whigs and conservative Democrats.

She believed in personal charity, though she approved of organized charity.

She did all that she could to help our colored population and felt an obligation to do it. Those of them who knew her liked her.

She had a strong sense of family and attended the Mitchell family reunions at Panthersville every year. She was always on hand to help, if help were needed, in illness or in sorrow.

She had little of the acquisitive instinct, but she liked comfort, and knew that in our present society, only money can buy it.

She was interested in medicine and read widely on medical subjects. It was well that she did, as she suffered many accidents and illnesses.

Her taste in food was simple. She preferred plain, well cooked, lightly seasoned dishes.

She never cared for wealth or for society as such, but if chance threw her with people of title, wealth or position she was as much at home as she was with simpler people.

Many of her friends were newspaper people, on the Georgia small town weekly papers as well as the city dailies. She always attended the meetings of the Georgia Press Institute.

Her ancestry was old American on her father's side—Scots, Irish and Huguenot French from Carolina. Her mother's people were Irish with a dash of Spanish Basque.

Both families had lived in the Carolinas and Georgia since Revolutionary days and had lived in the City of Atlanta for over a hundred years. She was of the fifth generation of her family who had lived in Atlanta. Of this fact she was very proud, for she loved her city.

In her youth, her hair was yellow, her eyes blue, her cheeks rosy, and she was neither fat nor thin. In her twenties her hair darkened to auburn color, and at her death it was a chestnut color with reddish tints.

If friends called her "Margaret," it was likely they had known her in childhood. She did not begin calling herself "Peggy" until she was about 20 years old.

She was 5 feet tall, erect, quick in movement. She spoke with the ordinary accent of an educated Atlantian, with average speed and good diction. Old people, deaf people and foreigners often remarked that they could understand her better than most other people.

In business affairs she was quick and decisive, once she had made up her mind. She had a clear grasp of problems and handled her affairs capably, but she did not like to do any work that involved mathematics, even of the simplest kind. Mathematics had been a hard subject for her as a child and she never came to like it.

She did not like the ownership of real estate, did not care to manage a large home, and preferred a comfortable apartment.

She knew how to entertain, and people always enjoyed her parties. Though she was obliged to decline many invitations, she enjoyed other people's parties. She learned to play bridge and in the 20's was an adequate player. She had no real interest in cards and as she grew older never played at all.

She did not enjoy listening to the radio, nor did she play any kind of musical instrument. She did not care for orchestra performances or concerts but she did like grand opera and regularly attended the performances in Atlanta's opera season.

The movies were one of her favorite diversions. She and her husband often went to the neighborhood movies in preference to the larger theaters. After his heart attack, they bought a movie projector and screen and ran off films in their living room.

She liked the legitimate theater. She was fond of good comedy, particularly of the slapstick variety.

When H. G. Wells' "Outline of History" came out in 1920, it was followed by "Parody Outline of History" by Donald Ogden Stewart. Margaret and her crowd loved to act out scenes from it at 1401 Peachtree, particularly "How Love

Came to General Grant." The long front rooms were thrown together, just as for her childhood plays.

She participated in every civic activity that called on her for aid, if she had the time and if she thought it important. She worked very hard during World War II for the Red Cross, in war bond sales campaigns, as an air raid warden and in other civilian defense activities.

She was always neatly dressed, though she cared very little for dress, as such. She wore a diamond bar pin, the gift of her husband, as her only jewelry.

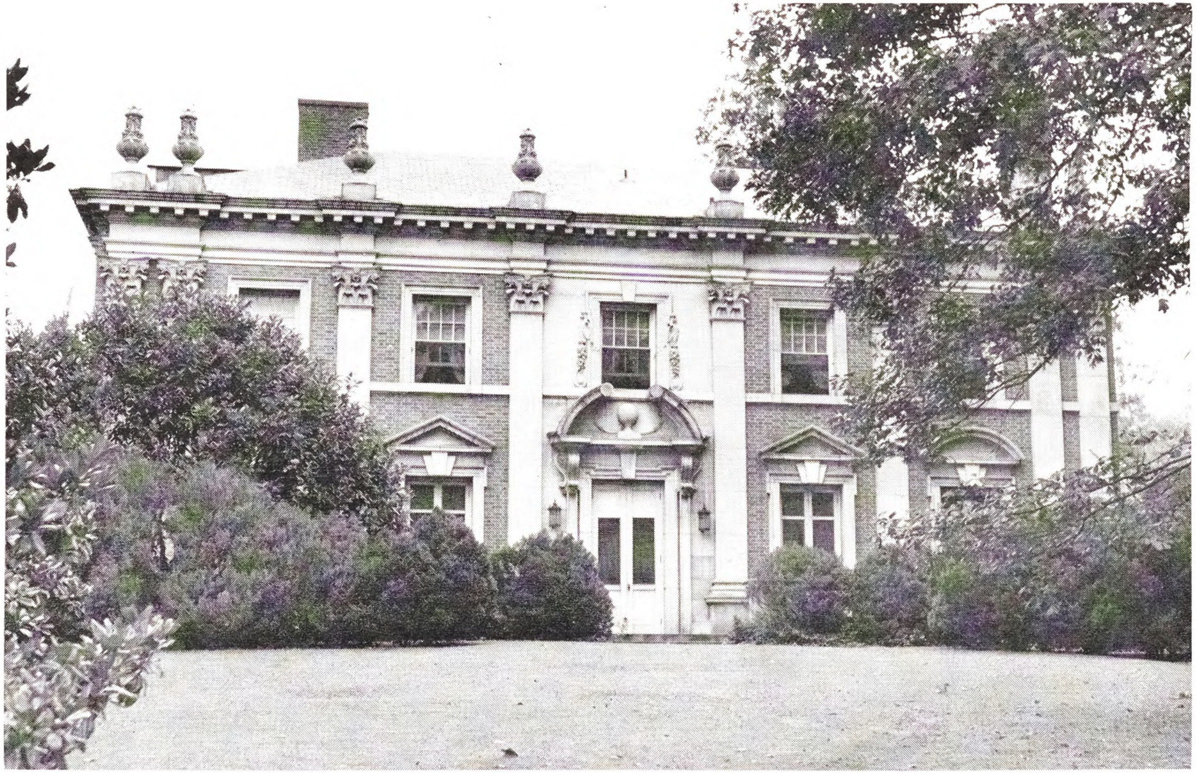
She liked occasional trips to Sea Island or to New York. She drove a car, but she drove it very slowly and cautiously. For this reason she made few motor trips.

She liked good books, but was not interested in fine bindings, though she enjoyed a finely cut type. She did not accumulate a large library, for she culled out her books frequently and gave them away.

She liked to meet people and see that they enjoyed themselves, though she liked solitude on occasion. Unfortunately she had little of this during the last thirteen years of her life.

Should this article ever be used for purposes of genealogical research I can state (a) All statements from the birth of William Mitchell on down are from original entries in family Bibles, collected by my father, and in my possession. (b) Statements as to Thomas Mitchell are from family tradition, and are not verified by original entries. (c) Admission to the D.A.R. and Daughters of American Colonists can be gained on descent from John Thomasson. (d) Admission to Huguenot Society of South Carolina (Descendant of Daniel Horry) can be gained on descent from Deborah Margaret Sweet.

Admission to U. D. C. may be gained through descent from (a) Russell Crawford Mitchell, I Company, 1st Texas Infantry, C. S. A.; (b) John Stephens, A Co., 9th Georgia Infantry, C. S. A.; (c) William Charles Sweet, I Company, 3d Georgia Reserves, Gartrell's Brigade, C. S. A.



Home of the Atlanta Historical Society, 1753 Peachtree Street, N. W. A Founder of the Society and one of its active workers, Margaret Mitchell was especially interested in projects like this—those which were of, and for the good of, her beloved Atlanta.

MARGARET MITCHELL
IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Margaret Mitchell's father and mother taught her to pay attention to public affairs and to give her services to the public if she was called on. She was always registered and she always voted.

She did not engage actively in politics but she had decided opinions about candidates and issues and did not hesitate to express them. Her time and her energies were often devoted to objectives which she felt should be attained.

The following letter from Mr. Hughes Spalding, President of Fulton-DeKalb Hospital Authority, illustrates this point:

Mr. Stephens Mitchell December 23, 1949.
Atlanta, Georgia

Dear Steve:

I am happy to say that Fulton-DeKalb Hospital Authority has funds in hand with which to build a pay hospital for Negroes at the southeast corner of Butler Street and Coca-Cola Place. The contract for the erection of this hospital has been let, and actual work will commence within a few weeks. It is a source of pride that we should be able here in Atlanta and Georgia to build a hospital of this nature in order to look after the needs of members of the Negro race who are not eligible at Grady and who therefore had no place to go when ill.

I can frankly say that I was the chief sponsor of this idea for a pay Negro hospital and that Frank Wilson and I sold it not only to the trustees of the hospital, but to the Fulton County Medical Society and to all other groups in this community which are interested in social welfare.

However, your sister, Margaret Mitchell Marsh, originated the idea with me. What I mean to say is that until after she discussed it with me, it never had occurred to me that it was a step that could be successfully taken.

In the spring of 1946, I requested Margaret to make a contribution to assist in building a new hospital for St. Joseph's Infirmary. She and John very graciously sent me a check for One Thousand ($1,000) Dollars to apply towards this good cause. At the same time she wrote me a letter dated April 17, 1946, and in that letter pleaded the cause of a Negro hospital of this nature and shortly thereafter I began to work on the project, and after three and one-half years it is an actuality. I wish to quote you from her letter to me as follows:

"I'm very interested in better hospital facilities in Atlanta,

> especially for colored people. Recently our colored laundress, who had worked for us for over twenty years, died of cancer. She was failing at the time I brought John home from the Brunswick hospital. I discovered that Steiner had been kindness itself and had done all they could do, her private physician had done his best. Her family are self-respecting people who have always paid their way and they were anxious to do all they could to ease Carrie. It fell upon me to find a hospital bed in which Carrie could die more comfortably than at home. So, while John was at his worst, I was trying to find a hospital bed for Carrie. I do not want ever again to go through the agonizing experiences I had. There just were no beds. It was not that Carrie's family and I were unwilling to pay. Carrie was like my own family and I would have paid all that I would have paid for a relative. The best promise we could get was a hospital bed in two or three weeks at Harris Memorial. We hoped Carrie would not last two or three weeks.
>
> "Finally I bethought myself of the Sisters at Our Lady of Perpetual Help and I threw myself upon them. I do not know if they violated their rule that their patients must be friendless and without money. At any rate, they took Carrie in and cared for her until she died three days later. It was with great gratitude that I made a donation to them.
>
> "I do not think people who have not experienced so heartbreaking a time can realize the need for more beds for our colored population who are able to pay something for medical and hospital care. I hope so much that some thought will be taken of this particular problem. We have heard so often in the past twenty years discussions of the problem of medical care for the white-collar class who are not rich enough to pay $9 a day at a hospital but who make enough money to keep them out of charity wards. Atlanta is big enough now to have colored people in the white-collar class, and I wonder how many of them have been in the situation of our Carrie, willing to pay but being unable to buy a bed in which to die.
>
> "The foregoing does not mean a lack of interest in hospital facilities for white people. I *am* interested and I hope to hear wonderful things. It is just that I feel many people are aware of the need for helping white people but most people are unaware of the Negro problem and are apt to dismiss it by saying 'why don't they go to Grady?' "

I feel that you and John will be interested in learning that Margaret was really the motivating influence which brought this pay hospital for Negroes to fruition.

(Signed) HUGHES SPALDING.

Associated Press Photo

She was a little thing to have written such a big book. This charming and rarely published picture was made in July, 1936, when her novel had just been published. The scene is the apartment which the Marshes then occupied at West Peachtree and Seventeenth streets.

MARGARET MITCHELL
AND THE WIDE, WIDE WORLD

By JOHN R. MARSH

Gone With the Wind was already a big success before it reached the bookstore counters. Margaret Mitchell herself had not expected it to sell 5,000 copies. Her publishers, The Macmillan Company, had been more optimistic but not remarkably so. Their figure for the first edition was 10,000 copies. But before the book reached its official publication date, both the 5,000 and the 10,000 goals had been left far behind.

The book had been scheduled for release in May, 1936. But, in April, *Gone With the Wind* was chosen by the Book of the Month Club and, to accommodate them, the publication date was moved up to June 30.

April, May and June of 1936 saw, first, a stirring of suspicion, then a rapidly growing certainty, that something remarkable was about to happen in the book world. A tremor of excitement rippled up, here and there, in far distant parts of the country. It was one of those phenomena that modern communication methods cannot explain. "One-person-tells-another," the original communications method and still the best, flashed the news along in a manner almost magical. From mouth to mouth, the word spread, and spread still further, that a book was coming that you must not miss. Bookstores doubled and redoubled their orders.

How *Gone With the Wind* passed through its successive stages—first, an unknown author's first novel; next, a runaway success, and then, a worldwide sensation, is vividly told in bulletins issued by the publishers during that summer of 1936. Here are a few of them in condensed form:

June 19—"Gone With the Wind," the forthcoming novel of the South in the sixties and seventies, by Margaret Mitchell, of Atlanta, is having a record-breaking advance sale. Already—two weeks before publication—it has piled up the largest advance sale of any book in recent years.

June 29—A fifth large printing of Margaret Mitchell's first novel, "Gone With the Wind," has been ordered, although the book is just out this week.

July 13—A sixth printing, making a total of 140,000 copies to date, is being rushed through the press. It will be ready this week and orders now on hand can then be taken care of.

July 20—176,000 copies of Margaret Mitchell's "Gone With the Wind" have now been printed in an attempt to cope with the steady inrush of orders. The book has been likened by various prominent critics to the work of Thackeray, Galsworthy, Tolstoy, Undset, Hardy, Trollope, Dickens, and Dumas.

July 23—What is believed to be a record in recent years has been established by Margaret Mitchell's "Gone With the Wind." Although it has been published only one month, printings already total 201,000 copies.

July 24—New orders booked yesterday totaled 10,753 copies.

August 5—"Gone With the Wind," by Margaret Mitchell, nationwide best seller, is now going into its ninth printing, bringing the total number of copies to 226,000.

August 17—Two printing plants are working on the book in three eight-hour shifts and two binderies are fastening the sheets together.

September 3—330,000 copies of Margaret Mitchell's "Gone With the Wind" had been printed up to August 30, two months after publication.

September 8—Another large printing of Margaret Mitchell's "Gone With the Wind" is now going through. This will bring the total up to 370,000.

And so, on and on, higher and higher. By the end of September, the total was 526,000 copies. By the end of October, 700,000 copies. Then in December, 1936, six months after publication, the book hit the million mark—and Margaret Mitchell left town on a vacation trip to Florida, to catch her breath and try to figure out what kind of a fix she had gotten herself into.

Now, thirteen years later, when the book has sold six times one million copies, has been translated into almost every civilized language, has stirred enthusiasm in Europe, Asia, South America and the islands of the sea, as great as in the author's native South, it is hard to think of "*Gone*

With the Wind" as anything but a giant among books. What reception did it get from the critics and book reviewers in 1936? Did anyone foresee its spectacular future?

No! Certainly Margaret Mitchell did not. Certainly her publishers did not. And nobody else did, for the simple reason that nobody could. It would have been too fantastic. But within the more reasonable limitations—did the book reviewers and critics like it or condemn it? The answer is that it received both praise and sneering condemnation. Many of the critics, on small newspapers and large, gave it their highest compliments, while another large segment saw no good in it and openly resented its public acclaim.

The *New York Herald-Tribune* gave its review of *Gone With the Wind* the entire first page of its book section. Henry Steele Commager described the book as "endlessly interesting" and "a dramatic re-creation of life itself." On the same Sunday, the *New York Times* also gave it the whole front page of its book section and acclaimed it even more highly. J. Donald Adams said, "This is beyond a doubt one of the most remarkable first novels produced by an American writer. It is also one of the best." He went on to speak the words that have become almost a trademark for the book, "In sheer readability, it is surpassed by nothing in American fiction."

The *Saturday Review of Literature* also gave it a full page and put the young author's picture on the cover. Stephen Vincent Benet hedged by describing it as "a good novel rather than a great one," but nevertheless said it was "as readable, full-bodied and consistent a historical novel as we have had in a long time."

The *Chicago Daily News* said it was "one of the great novels of our time." The *San Francisco Chronicle* said, "This is one of those books you will hate to finish."

Margaret Mitchell, reading these and many other flattering reviews and finding them hard to believe, waited anxiously for the Southern verdict on her book. The good opinion of her home folks was what she wanted most and she had been nervous about getting it. For wasn't her heroine a baggage, with nothing to recommend her but courage? And wasn't her hero a scoundrel, who profiteered at the expense of the Confederacy? And didn't her book contain the shameful truth that there were some deserters from the Confederate Army?

It was an exciting and happy time for her when the Southern reviews also turned out favorable. Samuel Tupper, Jr., in *The Atlanta Journal* commented that the story was "faultlessly told" and that "the people of Atlanta, and Georgia, will most fully realize with what unerring skill the author has caught the very atmosphere of the region, the very rhythm of a people's speech, the very accents of their thoughts."

The Macon Telegraph said it was "As rousing and exciting a story as ever has appeared within buckram." But it remained for Selma, Alabama, to give Margaret Mitchell her final assurance. The reviewer there said he or she wished every Yankee would read the book "and just bust." Margaret Mitchell knew then that the South did like her book.

Meanwhile, on the other side, some very sour and sarcastic comments were emitting from a group of prominent critics. Almost unanimously, they labeled the book as "purely escapist," meaning a book to be read for the pleasure of it and not because it would do you good. They said it was lacking in "philosophical content" and had no "sociological import." They complained that the author had no "social consciousness" and was totally uninterested in "mass movements." Those were the serious-minded Thirties, remember?

In *The New Republic*, Malcolm Cowley wrote that " 'Gone With the Wind' is an encyclopedia of the plantation legend," and he explained that this legend is "false in part and silly in part and vicious in its general effect on Southern life today." He added that Miss Mitchell "writes with a splendid recklessness, blundering into big scenes that a more experienced novelist would hesitate to handle."

Evelyn Scott in *The Nation* admitted that Miss Mitchell "is vigorous enough to imbue her work with dramatic bouyancy" but added that, "Unfortunately her temperamental limitations as a critic both of mass movements and personal behavior are such that she often gives a shallow effect." The book she described as "sprinkled with clichés and verbal ineptitudes." But she contemplated the possibility that Miss Mitchell might later "master the wide significances implicit in her own material."

More emphatic was Louis Kronenberger in *The New Yorker*. " 'Gone With the Wind' deserves to be extravagantly praised as a masterpiece of pure escapism. It provides a kind of catharsis, not, to be sure, of pity and terror, but rather of all the false sentiment and heady goo that even the austerest mind somehow accumulates."

When the book was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1937, the snobbish reviewers returned to the attack. They said the awards committee had been swayed by the book's popularity and that a dozen other novels of that year were "obviously superior."

A year later, Bernard deVoto was still hammering away. He wrote a long article for the *Saturday Review* about Civil War novels, beginning with the first of them soon after the war and coming up to those of the 1930's. The latter group he regarded as especially meritorious, for "the Civil War novel of our time has become a sociological novel, and not only that but a social, a critical, a philosophical novel as well." He took up, one by one, a half dozen of *Gone With the Wind's* contemporaries, discussed each at length, praised it highly. *Gone With the Wind* he dismissed in a few sentences. It is "important as a phenomenon but hardly as a novel," he said. "It has too little thought and no philosophical overtone. . . . The size of its public is significant; the book is not."

Margaret Mitchell was not disturbed by these comments. If the reviewers found "ineptitudes" and other defects in her book, well, she had been so little satisfied with it herself, she had never planned publishing it at all. About the lack of "sociological import" and so forth, she said these critics were not reviewing the book she had written. They were interested only in telling her how she *ought* to have written it, and they were angry with her because she had not made it fit their pattern.

They did not know, and could not see, that she and her book had created a new pattern—or had revived a very old and very fine one.

The catapulting of Margaret Mitchell into worldwide prominence makes a remarkable story, but it is far less remarkable than how she held her position through thirteen long years and grew in it, year by year. So rarely does this happen! So often does sudden fame destroy those who achieve it! Margaret Mitchell, who had asked for nothing of the kind, suddenly found herself famous. She did not advance into it by easy stages but in one long leap. Abruptly, almost overnight, her accustomed world was shattered and she found herself walking down a road she had never seen before. It was a lonely road and a dangerous road. Pitfalls of every kind beset her feet. But she never made a false step. She held firmly to the course for thirteen years, and every year she was greater in public stature than the year before.

What was written and said when she died attested to the unique position she held in public admiration and respect. No other author, and few of any rank, could have been so universally mourned.

Editorial tributes were published in newspapers by the hundreds, not only in her native Georgia, where she was personally known to all the editors, but in faraway places like Maine and Nebraska, Ontario and New Zealand, Italy and Ireland, which knew her only through her book.

Spain's weekly *Destino,* in a long article with photograph, said, "We knew of her kindness and tenderness of heart." The *Kansas City Star* compared her at length with Victor

Hugo and gave her the decision on points. The *Saturday Review of Literature,* which had published some of the hostile criticisms in 1936 and 1937, made amends in an editorial that displayed real understanding as well as sympathy. It said in part:

"The death of Margaret Mitchell had a strange effect on people who had never seen her. It was not her success alone that produced everywhere the expressions of grief and of anger at the means of her death. The modesty with which she accepted her fate in the twelve years that followed the novel had produced its unconscious effect on many of her readers. . . . It (her novel) has something, or everything, in in that the public wants, a magnificently told dramatic narrative and a love story so imperatively moving that Rhett Butler and Scarlett O'Hara have become the lineal descendants of all the great fictional lovers of the past, and the fall of Atlanta in our Civil War has become one with the siege of Troy."

Following are excerpts from a few of the editorials, only a small part of the total:

Atlanta Journal—She did for Atlanta and its countryside what Sir Walter Scott had done for the Highlands with his "Marmion" and "Lady of the Lake." Scenes which hitherto were known merely in local legend, incidents which otherwise would have been forgotten, were translated into the wide world's literature. Peachtree Street and Ezra Church were made familiar names the world round, thanks to the magic of Margaret Mitchell's pen. . . . Success has been called "a fatal gift," so frequently has it brought forth pride and discontent. Peggy Mitchell had a strength, a wisdom, a sweetness and a soundness that could never be thus betrayed. She wore her laurels lightly as a flower and counted herself happiest in ministering to friends who needed her most.

Atlanta Constitution—She was a vital, forthright person, not afraid to have and express opinions. She had a feeling for people, as her book revealed. She was constantly doing helpful things. The meek, the sick, the obscure knew her charity and kindness. Fame and riches came to her suddenly and unexpectedly, yet changed not at all her personality, her outlook nor her direction. . . . She had faith and courage. She loved life and laughter. The measure of her deeds is greater than is crowded, often, into many lives.

Beth Williams in the Quitman Free Press—My memories of the hours spent in her company are filled with laughter, gaiety and genuine good cheer. She was the most natural person I ever knew.

L K S in the Augusta Herald—Margaret Mitchell seemed to belong peculiarly to our own part of the country. She was one of us and I think that every Georgian felt a personal pride in her genius and in its recognition by the whole world of civilized people.

Savannah Morning News—Will "Gone With the Wind" go down as a classic? The *Morning News* believes that it will, not only because of the excellent story it tells but because of the simplicity of the telling of it.

Muncie, Indiana, Evening Press—The untimely death of Margaret Mitchell is a tragic blow to American literature and a personal loss to millions to whom her epic story had clothed the dry bones of history with flesh and understanding. . . . Because she told well the story of her people, she helped to close the gap made by the events she painted with broad and vivid strokes.

Montpelier, Vermont, Argus—We join with many others in regretting the death of Margaret Mitchell. According to Clifton Fadiman, when he spoke recently in Burlington, the novel was not a literary masterpiece. . . . But it contained enough drama, excitement and romance for a dozen novels. In spite of Clifton Fadiman, we believe "Gone With the Wind" was one of the finest books ever written. Because of it, the name of Margaret Mitchell will never be forgotten.

Petersburg, Virginia, Progress Index—The death of no other modern author could have brought quite the same sense of loss to so many millions of people around the world.

New York Times—Margaret Mitchell was a tiny Southern lady with bright, blue eyes and dark auburn hair who wrote one book. It made her one of the most famous writers of our time. . . . In her untimely death, which millions in this country and abroad will mourn, the South and the Nation have lost one of their most beloved and admired personages. Certainly she will always be one of our most remarkable literary figures. How long will it be before another writer, man or woman, appears unheralded on the literary scene with so successful and effective a first novel — and having had her say be content to remain silent thereafter? Perhaps, after all, it is this aspect of Miss Mitchell's career that speaks most eloquently of her modesty and wisdom.

Ottawa, Canada, Evening Journal—For millions of readers over the world, her novel has told them all they know of the American Civil War. They read it, though, not for history but as a vivid and fascinating human document put in the form of fiction, and its author will not soon be forgotten.

Robert Ruark in numerous papers—GWTW was a tremendously long book, but it never abandoned its pace and it never sagged in the middle. . . . I suppose they will shoot me for saying that Scarlett and Rhett and Mammy will hang around the future with Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer, but they will. In my tired eyes, Miss Mitchell's labor showed a higher craftsmanship than a great deal of Mark Twain's work.

Lynchburg, Virginia, Advance — Many Virginians discovered in reading "Gone With the Wind" that the War Between the States had not been an exclusively Virginian affair. Since reading it they have, when thinking of that war, looked Southward to Georgia as well as about them.

Manchester, England, Guardian—Miss Mitchell, a former journalist and a woman of courage, generosity and good sense, never attempted to repeat her success. . . . One must feel a certain sadness that a writer of such power hung up her arms on the wall of the temple while they were still so sharp.

New York Herald-Tribune—Sectional novels often win little more than sectional success but Margaret Mitchell's book, a growth of North Georgia's red earth, went round the world. Owners of the book read and re-read it. When it was put on the screen, many went to the four-hour film twice and three times. Critics have pondered the vast and continuing popularity of the novel, but the best-based reason for its huge sale is that it is really a great narrative and great romance. For the average reader, it has out-historied history, and Scarlett O'Hara has become better known across the nation than General Sherman. Atlanta was burned, but "Gone With the Wind" became a latter-day Confederate victory.

Bob Considine in numerous papers — A whole nation mourns "pure, benevolent, filial and obedient" Peggy Mitchell, the girl who was born to write the Great American Novel, and did.

Grand Island, Nebraska, Independent—People who would look blank at the mention of General Pierre Gustav Beauregard or Jeb Stuart can tell you instantly all about Scarlett O'Hara and Rhett Butler. Their stormy romance is as famous as the loves of Tristram and Isolde, Lancelot and Elaine, Hero and Leander, Ulysses and Penelope.

Dublin, Ireland, Irish Times—Miss Mitchell's celebrated novel is a better book than its popularity might lead some captious persons to assume. . . . As matters stand, she is credited with only one book, which has been a resounding and deserved success for nearly a decade and a half. There are few celebrated writers who have no failures to their name. On this count alone Miss Mitchell deserves a small corner of Parnassus to call her own.

Waterloo, Iowa, Courier—Margaret Mitchell will be particularly revered in the South, whose flamboyant agonies of the Civil War period she portrayed so brilliantly and with such tender sympathy.

Lewiston, Maine, Sun—The novel and the movie gave delight to so many millions of people that Margaret Mitchell could truly be said to have achieved mightily in the brief span of her years. They comprise a monument that the passage of time can never erode.

Louisville, Kentucky, Courier-Journal—In 1936 a phenomenon occurred. It was embodied in a thick novel that charmed imaginations everywhere, opened magic casements upon romance all over the world. And, what is more, it was an authentic and moving historical narrative and the representation of a culture which, however dead in time, was to be immortalized by those pages. . . . Margaret Mitchell created legend, but she was herself to become legend. And now the legend is enveloped in the tragedy that accompanies most of those that last.

Hackensack, New Jersey, Record—There have been smaller women and greater writers than Margaret Mitchell, but never has so diminutive a woman done anything so big in the literary world.

Montgomery, Alabama, Advertiser—Whatever she was, she threw a mightier bolt from the blue with one cast than the combined throws of Dreiser, Lewis, Wolfe and Hemingway—and for good measure—Jane Austen and Kathleen Winsor. . . . She provided an enchantment with her story of a woman scoundrel and her man in a war that, for range and durability, has no counterpart in the history of American literature. She was thus a great author and only a literary fop would argue the point.

Montreal, Canada, Gazette—Around the world, millions who read and re-read the thousand-page book and saw and re-saw the four-hour film version will note and mourn the tragic passing of the young woman who gave them the greatest novel of the South, and an understanding of that historic section of America, past and present, they would never otherwise have obtained.

Pawtucket, Rhode Island, Times—Miss Mitchell had written both history and drama. She had told the story she knew almost as well as if she had lived it.

Baltimore Sun—No one has ever satisfactorily analyzed the astonishing appeal of "Gone With the Wind." . . . It is doubtful that Miss Mitchell herself knew the secret. One thing is sure: she entertained and gave pleasure to more readers in a space of thirteen years than any other writer of a single book. That vast public will mourn her untimely death.

Charleston, South Carolina, News and Courier—Of Margaret Mitchell, *The News and Courier* said the morning before the news of her death came that all Southerners loved her. In columns, *The News and Courier* could pay her no higher tribute. She made the Southerners understood. She was one of them, a dear, sweet woman who had charity that "vaunteth not itself." Her life and her book were realization of genius, goodness and modesty.

She had a hearty laugh and enjoyed a good joke. "She was a lot of fun," her husband said. Here is Margaret Mitchell with two associates of her Atlanta Journal days, Lambdin Kay, left, former Manager of WSB, and John Paschall, Editor Emeritus of the Journal.

PEGGY MITCHELL
NEWSPAPERMAN
By WILLIAM S. HOWLAND

(Editor's Note. William S. Howland, who opened the TIME, LIFE *and* FORTUNE *Magazines Atlanta newsbureau January 1, 1940, and has been its chief for the following ten years, was a reporter on* THE ATLANTA JOURNAL *when Margaret Mitchell was an* ATLANTA JOURNAL SUNDAY MAGAZINE *staff writer. He later worked with her husband, John R. Marsh, for three years as an advertising writer.)*

It was in December, 1922, that Margaret Mitchell launched herself on the professional writing career which 14 years later was to lead her to world renown as an author.

I say "launched herself" advisedly because that is just what Peggy, then a girl of 22, did. After coming home from Smith College following her mother's death and after going through the usual routine of the sheltered Southern "society girl" of that time, even making a debut, she determined to support herself by writing. So with some help from friends who had newspaper connections, but mostly on her own, she got herself a job as a reporter on the *Atlanta Journal Sunday Magazine*—itself then just ten years old.

Although the *Journal* has often written of Peggy as its most famous staff member, the fact is that she was thrown for a loss on her first attempt to get a job there. That happened some weeks prior to her successful assault on the ramparts of the *Sunday Magazine.*

On that occasion, Peggy approached City Editor Harllee Branch to ask for a job on the city staff and showed him some of her college writings.

Recalling that, said Mr. Branch the other day: "I was impressed by her earnestness and the way she went about asking for a job. We talked it over and I wanted to give her a job. But there were no women reporters on the paper then except on the Sunday Mag and the Society section and we felt the time was not ready for the *Journal* to hire regular women reporters."

But it was characteristic of the Peggy of 1922—as of the

Peggy of 1949—that she would not take "No" for an answer to her determination. She went next to seek a job on the *Sunday Magazine.*

Just how she accomplished the job of promoting herself as a prospective staffer to Angus Perkerson, the meticulous Scot who has edited the *Journal Sunday Magazine* from its beginning in 1912 to the present, no one recalls. Talking about it recently, Perkerson said: "I can't quite remember what we said, but I remember very distinctly how Peggy came down to see me one day. One of our girl writers was quitting to get married and Peggy wanted that job. She looked very tiny. She was wearing a suit and a beret. We talked for a while in the sort of file room which adjoined that room where we all worked—all five of us. I remember Peggy said something about her experience. Anyhow, she got the job—and kept it."

And so, at 8 o'clock on a December morning—probably December 20—in 1922 she reported for work as a reporter on the *Sunday Magazine,* to fill the place vacated by Mrs. Roy Flannagan, who had forsaken journalism for matrimony.

In that way Peggy launched herself on her career as a professional writer. That itself was no mean achievement in those Atlanta newspaper days of the 1920's. For they were days far different from the Atlanta newspaper days of the shining new plants and the five-day week of 1950. In the 1920's, newspapering in Atlanta was a much more rugged, more demanding trade.

When Peggy went to work for the Atlanta *Journal* one chilly December morn in 1922, the *Journal* was an independent, Atlanta-owned, daily, evening and Sunday newspaper. It was written, edited and published in the old five-story, smoke-stained, rat-infested, roach-ridden, red brick building which rose in grimy ruggedness above the railroad tracks on Forsyth Street. It was just north of the tracks and on the east side of the street, directly opposite the shining clean and highly polished building that houses the

Journal of today. There were no Diesel switch engines or locomotives in the 1920's. There were only smoke-belching, soft-coal burning steam locomotives. The southern side of the *Journal* building was shrouded constantly with nauseous clouds of black smoke from the puffing engines. In winter, with the windows closed, it was hard enough to breathe without strangling. In summer, when it was a question of open the windows or suffocate, it was next to impossible. It was no uncommon occurrence for a red hot cinder to fall on one's desk. And it required iron concentration to take news over the phone or to write news, with locomotive whistles bellowing, engine bells clanging, just outside the window.

It was, indeed, a rugged physical environment into which Peggy moved to take her first professional writing job. Perhaps most rugged of all was the third floor back office in which the *Sunday Magazine* was quartered. Dark, gloomy, with its soot-begrimed windows looking out on an alley, across which was a small hotel—at whose occupants the office boy used to shoot pins—the *Sunday Magazine's* single room "office" was later patly described by Peggy as "The Black Hole of Calcutta." It just about lived up to that name—with its battered wooden desks, its single telephone with one extension, its tables covered with newspapers, its far from new typewriters.

Peggy had an old, upright Underwood typewriter, which was bouncy, jumpy and jittery from senility. It did not even have a backspacer on it, and since Peggy was a "hunt and peck" typist, that lack gave her plenty of trouble.

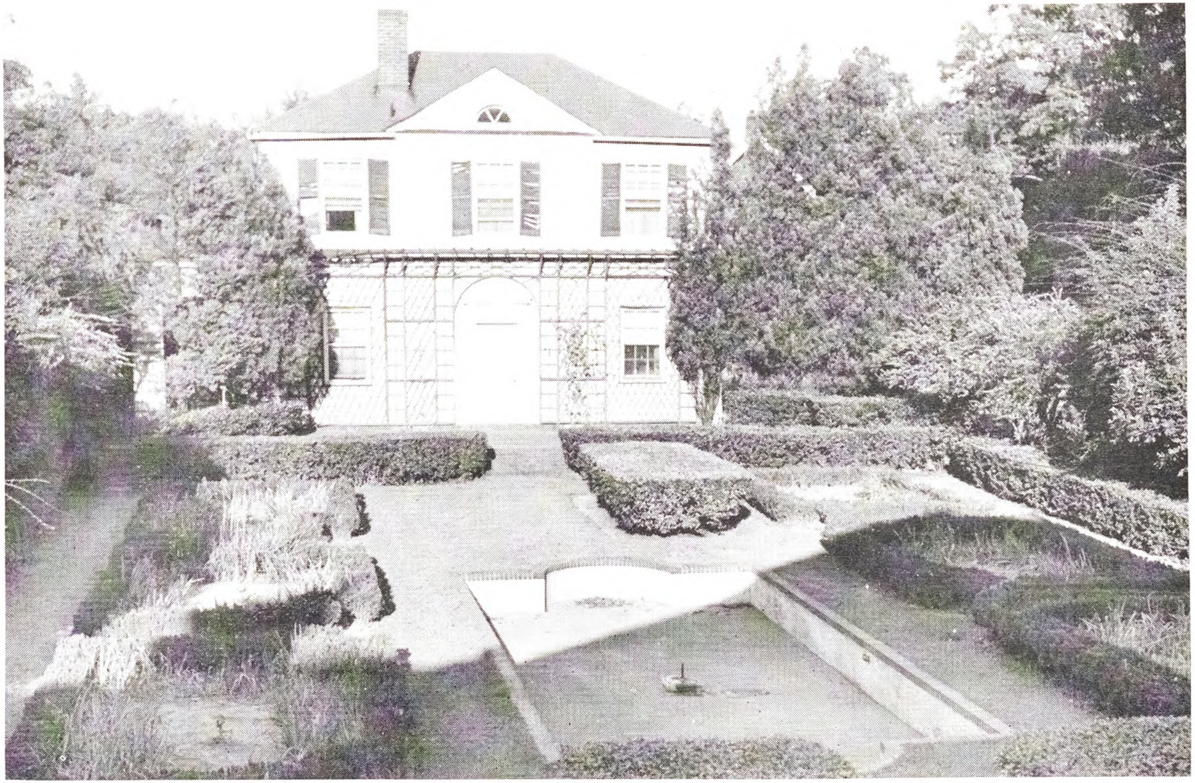
But she always said that old battered machine had the sweetest running movement of any typewriter she ever used. She later tried to buy it, only to find it had been junked.

In addition to typewriter trouble, Peggy had chair trouble. The old wooden chair, kitchen type, furnished her was too high for her short legs to reach the floor when she sat on it. So she appealed to the *Journal* maintenance department to saw off the legs. A *Journal* carpenter sawed the legs off, but unevenly. So Peggy got her own saw and kept sawing away at the chair legs until she got the legs short enough—and all even.

Rugged as was the physical set-up of the *Journal* in the twenties, perhaps even more rugged was the professional set-up. Those were days when the *Journal* had a relentless competitor in the afternoon newspaper field and when the two battled daily to be out first with the latest news. Hearst's Atlanta *Georgian and Sunday American* was bought out and swallowed up by the *Journal* in December, 1939. It had never been successful financially or politically, but for three decades it had given the *Journal* a hard race for leadership in reporting and presenting the news. It never lacked in enterprise and it kept the *Journal* on the jump.

The radio then was just making a feeble, squawking beginning. It had not reached its present commanding position of being able to flash the news instantly over the air before a newspaper press can turn a wheel. Those were days of Extra editions, when newspapers strained every nerve and muscle to be on the street first with any big news. When the newsboys calling "Extra! Extra!" were the public's first warning of sensational events.

In Atlanta, those were also days of rugged, masculine news staffs. When Peggy went to work on the *Journal*, its editor was the late Major John S. Cohen, a superb newsman who kept in close touch with the city room. The news department was directly commanded by Managing Editor John Paschall, another fine newsman, who had his office, not in any glass-enclosed cubicle, but over in one corner of the paper-cluttered, soot-dusted, spittoon-encrusted city room. In direct charge of the city news staff was Mr. Branch, a hard driving, hard-shouting, hawk-eyed bundle of energy, who could spot a tipsy reporter or an error in a story seemingly a block away, and who could think of night assignments with almost demoniacal perception for a reporter who had a date. He kept his staffers on their toes by continually bellowing at the top of his very adequate voice.



Rear view of Atlanta Historical Society Building, 1753 Peachtree Street, N. W., where a Margaret Mitchell Memorial Library is being planned. Valuable documents and books presented to the Society by her and others would be housed in a fire-proof structure.

Those were entirely masculine days for the city news staff. There was none of the tribe of sob-sisters or women reporters then on the *Journal* city staff. The staff was composed entirely of men—most of them about equally proud of their ability to drink hard as to work hard. They wrote hard, factual news stories—often of crime and punishment—but with an almost fanatical zeal for factual accuracy and with a politeness, strange in today's news writing, when dealing with unfortunates of either sex who took their own lives or otherwise became embroiled in activities which did not seem fit for a family newspaper. Sex did not rear its sinister head starkly in *Journal* stories of the early twenties. There was a noticeable reticence in dealing with the spicier details of the misdeeds of local high society or high business folk. Those were days of the straight, factual news story, without the emotional fancy, and often superficial trimmings of the news writing of today.

If you were a *Journal* reporter in the Twenties, you were supposed to work eight hours (at least) a day, six days a week, regularly. You were fortunate if you did not catch two night assignments a week. Of course, every other week you stayed on Saturday night to help get out the Sunday paper. In addition to doing this much work, without complaining excessively, the men were supposed to be able to consume corn liquor with equal vigor and not show it excessively.

All in all, it was a robust, masculine atmosphere into which ex-debutante Peggy Mitchell, as green a cub as ever approached a newspaper, moved to take her first professional writing job.

The organization she had joined considered itself the best in the South. Youngsters on the staff were reminded that the *Journal* had produced Grantland Rice, Don Marquis and other notables. Peggy Mitchell was by no means the only one, before her and since, who graduated from a *Journal* job into fame and fortune.

The *Journal* of those days also had *esprit de corps* of the kind you read about but seldom find. The elevator man was someone you knew, better than present day workers know those whose desks are side by side with them. You addressed the telephone operators by their first names when you placed a call. At lunchtime, reporters, editors, top executives, pressroom men in overalls and sweaty shirts, every other variety of *Journal* worker, crowded into the little cafe on the first floor, sat at rickety tables or milled about at the counter, shouted back and forth, told jokes, ate the rugged fare.

It was a rowdy group, a free and easy group, and it might be that was what held them together. They cursed the *Journal* for the low pay, and they worked for the *Journal* with an enthusiasm that money could never buy. They cursed the long hours and, at the end of the long day, they had steam enough left over to work up elaborate practical jokes involving the connivance of every department of the paper.

If you were ever accepted as one of them, you became part of a hard working, hard hitting team. Not everyone made it; simply being hired by the *Journal* was no guarantee of your acceptance into the *Journal* fellowship. Peggy Mitchell did make the team. Long before she became a famous novelist, the *Journal* people were proud to claim her as one of their own.

Her name first appears on the musty, dusty payroll, which Business Manager Hedley B. Wilcox and I found recently in a vault in the new *Journal* building basement, for the week of January 22, 1923—at the figure of $25 weekly. But it is certain that she went to work earlier, for her name—her "by-line" in newspaper language—appears over her first story in the Magazine dated December 31, 1922. It is probable that she received her pay for the first two weeks by voucher, instead of regular pay check.

For the following four years and four months, Peggy Mitchell worked as a professional newspaperwoman. In that period of time, she turned out 128 signed feature stories—

and many more that were not signed—for the *Sunday Magazine* and sometimes for the city staff.

On May 3, 1926, she received her final regular pay check from the Atlanta *Journal.* It was check No. 2915—and it was for $30. She had received two raises since 1922, of $2.50 a week each. It was not much as today's newspaper wages go, but a genuine testimonial of satisfactory achievement then, when women reporters were tolerated and not sought.

That ended Peggy Mitchell's professional newspaper career. For some months she continued to write, at home, a column of chit-chat which the *Journal Magazine* published under the heading "Elizabeth Bennet's Gossip." But her staff career extended less than four and a half years.

In that comparatively brief period—what is regarded generally as a training period for most reporters—Peggy transformed herself from an enthusiastic but grass-green cub reporter, into a competent news getter and news writer. She was never a star reporter—she was not in the business long enough to become a star. She won her Pulitzer prize for fictional writing, not factual reporting—but she did win the respect and admiration of her colleagues, men and women, for the way she made good in a hard, masculine business, asking no favors and giving none. She did it by hard sense and hard work.

Recalling Peggy's work as a Magazine staffer, said Editor Perkerson recently: "I was a little bit worried about putting her on the staff, because she was a society girl, and I said to Medora (Mrs. Perkerson, then also a staff writer) 'Medora, I reckon we'll always be waiting for her to get to work.' But I was wrong there—she was always waiting for us when we got there in the morning, because she came to town on the street car and had to leave home before the cook got there. So she ate breakfast in the little cafe in the building—the *Journal* folks called it "The Roachery" —and then she sort of opened up the office. One thing I liked about her was that she was always ready to take on any story—she never looked down on any story. And she wrote like a man. She always said I turned her first story hind side before—I can't remember just what I did—but I do remember that after that her stories did not require much editing. They ran as she wrote them."

On her first assignment, to do the story published December 31, 1922, under the heading "Atlanta Girl Sees Italian Revolution," Peggy Mitchell showed that although she did not then have newspaper experience, she did have a reporter's instinct, the much publicized but rare "nose for news."

On that first assignment she was sent out to interview Mrs. Mary Hines Gunsalaus, who had recently returned from a European trip and was visiting her parents. Peggy was assigned to get Mrs. Gunsalaus' opinions on whether skirts would be shorter, according to styles observed in Paris. But in addition to finding out about styles, she also heard Mrs. Gunsalaus talking about being in Rome the day Mussolini and the Fascisti took over the government. She copied down quotes on that. Then, like a good but inexperienced reporter, she took the street car back to the office, wrote her story about Mrs. Gunsalaus' opinions on the length of skirts, added the quotes about seeing the Italian Revolution. She was somewhat surprised, those on the staff say, when Editor Perkerson turned the story around, put the quotes about the Italian revolution ahead of the fashion items.

The story, as published, reads like a cub's story, but it has flashes of good reportorial instinct. It was the first to bear Peggy's by-line and it started off: "Revolution in Italy, Fashions in Paris, Poverty in Germany. Mrs. Mary Hines Gunsalaus talked of these things at the home of her parents, Judge and Mrs. J. K. Hines, on Peachtree Road, where she is visiting after a three months tour of Europe. Mrs. Gunsalaus was in Italy when the Fascisti overthrew the government."

From there on, the story consisted mostly of direct quotes from the interviewee. It was better reporting than writing—being a bit disjointed and lacking any description of what

Mrs. Gunsalaus looked like or wore. But it was highly readable.

Peggy's second story, published January 7, 1923, under the heading "Plant Wizard Does Miracle Here" showed that she was beginning to learn her newswriting trade. She got her teeth into the story right at the start and seized the reader's interest with a striking statement. The story began: "There's a man out Peachtree Road who can give a strawberry a 'shot in the arm' and make it feel so good it doesn't care a whoop for freezing weather. He is a small man with a kindly face, a white mustache and a shock of white Paderewski-like hair on which a battered derby was tilted. A shirt open at the neck, a sailor's pea-jacket and a pair of muddy, kneeless trousers completed his costume."

That's vivid news writing—the kind of writing that comes from perceptive reporting.

Peggy was on her way—she was learning the newspaper trade.

From that beginning, she wrote on, week after week, for more than four years—averaging a signed story and probably an unsigned one nearly every week. A glance at the *Journal Magazine's* yellowing files shows that she wrote on a wide variety of topical subjects of the times and interviewed many celebrities.

For example, here's a roll call of some of the headlines over her stories, mirroring the Atlanta life of the early Twenties: "Laundry List Sung by Atlanta Sub-Deb"; "Through the Cave of the Lost Indians"; "No Dumbbells Wanted, Say Atlanta Debs"; "Graveyard Dirt Is Newest Conjur Charm"; "Atlanta Man Just Missed Tutankhamen"; "Dancers Now Drown Out Even the Cowbell"; "Gay Flowers Made in DeKalb Prison Cell"; "Maxim Talks of Perfume, War and Poetry"; "Spring Styles in Slang Reach Atlanta"; "Hanging Over Atlanta In Borglum's Sling"; "Bridesmaid of '87 Recalls Mittie Roosevelt's Wedding"; "Valentino Declares He Isn't a Sheik"; "Candlers Bring Rare Curios from

Orient"; "Road Show Girls Record Dressers"; "Boyish Bob Brings Back Corsets"; "Grandma Veal Speaks Her Mind on Her 102nd Birthday"; "Fairburn Woman Heir to $6,000,000; "Harry Thaw Sees Atlanta Battlefields"; "Should Skirts Be Longer?"; "Tiger Flowers Quotes Psalms on Fighting."

Topics such as those were the stories on which Peggy sharpened her reporting and her writing from December 31, 1922, until May 9, 1926, when she wrote her last signed *Sunday Magazine* story under the headlines: "Pigeons to Race from Havana to Atlanta."

In all of them, she reached under the surface to get a twist that would ensnare and hold the reader's interest, tug at his emotions. She had the good reporter's gift of making the individuals she interviewed come alive in print, speak direct quotes, create a picture in the reader's mind.

For example, when she reported her interview with Hudson Maxim, the inventor, she attempted no fancy writing. Instead she started her story simply: "Mrs. Maxim, tiny and sweetfaced, was holding Hudson Maxim's bare feet on her lap, drawing on his socks in their room at the Piedmont hotel, when the interviewer entered somewhat abashed.

" 'Oh, don't mind me,' roared the inventor, waving one bare foot toward a chair. Hudson Maxim tugged at his white beard and smiled—a sturdy old man with a magnificent leonine head topped with a mass of unruly white curls—a personality as well as a celebrity."

Does the reader need a picture to see Hudson Maxim? Not unless he cannot read.

Equally vivid, but different was Peggy's story of her stunt assignment in trying out the sling designed for Sculptor Gutzon Borglum's workmen to use in his ill-starred attempt to carve a Confederate memorial on the side of Stone Mountain. To obtain real feeling for her story—and to provide appealing photos—Peggy was loaded into the sling, swung out of an office building window far above Atlanta's streets.

She began her story after the fashion of a then famous theatrical team:

Oh, Mr. Gallagher!
Oh, Mr. Gallagher!
Do you see the human fly a-climbing high?
Oh he took an awful chance,
When he hung there by his pants.
Feats of daring, Mr. Gallagher?
Plain d-n foolishness, Mr. Shean!

" 'No sir or madam!' In the words of the immortal Bert Williams, 'Somebody else, not me,' is going to have to do all that carving on the side of Stone Mountain that is expected to bring into existence the world's most magnificent monument to the Southern Confederacy."

After that beginning, Peggy gave an exciting first person story of how it feels to be swung out over space on a swing. "One doesn't feel so good when one is shoved out of the window of a skyscraper," she commented in definite understatement.

On another occasion, she had an even more thrilling personal experience story to write—she had been sent out to interview Rudolph Valentino—which she did on the roof of a hotel porch and then was unable, because of her small stature, to get back through the window. Wrote Peggy: "As masterfully as ever he sheiked Agnes Ayres (note—Agnes Ayres was a movie star of the 20's, who co-starred with Valentino in a silent film entitled 'The Sheik'), he picked me up and lifted me through the window. As he stood there, with me in his arms, one young girl gasped, 'Oh, the lucky little devil' and then he deposited me on the floor. I scrambled to my feet all aglow, wondering whether I had better register deep emotion, thrills or say 'Sir, how dare you.' I ended by registering a world beating blush, dropping my vanity case, pulling the hem out of the back of my dress with my heel, as I bent to retrieve it and bumped heads with Valentino."

Time and again, Peggy showed her ability to handle different kinds of stories. For example, one of her last *Journal Sunday Magazine* stories was an interview with the late great Negro pugilist, Tiger Flowers, whom she went to see at his Atlanta home. She began her story with a direct quotation from Flowers: "One time the congregation of my church come to me and say, 'Tiger Flowers, how do you reconcile this prize fighting with being a steward in the church?' And I picked up the Bible," continued the Atlanta Negro who recently won the middleweight championship of the world by defeating Harry Greb, "and I showed them Psalm 144 and I read it out loud and the congregation say, 'Tiger, that shore is the truf.' "

From that beginning, Peggy went on to give a straightforward description of how Tiger Flowers lived with his wife and child, where they lived, to quote him on his religion, to make the simple, honest pugilist live and breathe in print.

It was, as Editor Perkerson says, "written like a man."

That was the kind of stories Peggy Mitchell wrote and signed in her four years and five months as a member of the Atlanta *Journal Sunday Magazine* staff—stories close to the people, to the minds and to the emotions of Atlantans. But that was not all she did—far from it.

In those robust days, the *Sunday Magazine* staff was charged not only with getting out a 32-page magazine, but also with editing and producing a Sunday rotagravure picture section—"The Brown Section" as it was called. Peggy, like the other staff members, had to select pictures and write captions for them. Very popular rotogravure material was the baby pictures— and the *Sunday Magazine's* office tables were often piled high with surplus baby pictures. Part of Peggy's job was to soothe those whose progeny's pictures failed to appear in print. That often required diplomacy of a very high order.

Again, she, like other *Sunday Magazine* staffers, had to read proof on all the material in the Mag. When she first appeared for work, she knew no more about reading proof than an Australian bushman. But she didn't want anyone else to learn that she didn't know—so she got one of the veteran composing room proofreaders to show her. They became fast friends. When he died, she persuaded Mrs. Perkerson, a fellow staffer, to drive her to his funeral, out in Clarksdale. Recalls Mrs. Perkerson: "I had just learned to drive and we were a menace to everyone on the highway, but after that Peggy was the darling of the composing room. They'd do anything for her."

In her proofreading duties, she read proofs of the columns then contributed by the late Bishop Warren A. Candler and Dr. Cary B. Wilmer. They both became her friends. She also had to divide, paste up and proofread the long serial story which the *Sunday Magazine* then considered essential —and which it published in its own columns on Sundays and continued over into the regular paper on week-days. This complicated method caused parts of the serial frequently to become lost or jumbled. Peggy used to tell the story that once a whole chapter of a heart-throbbing romance was lost and she simply wrote a new one to fill in.

Besides all these duties, she often had to fill in as writer of the *Sunday Magazine's* "Advice to the Lovelorn" column, entitled, "Courtship, Marriage and Manners." And from time to time, she would be drafted by City Editor Branch, over Angus Perkerson's anguished protests, to do a feature for the regular paper.

Recalled ex-City Editor Branch: "The first time she did a story for me she was very nervous. She was afraid it wouldn't be good enough. But when she saw me showing her story to some of the men reporters and telling them they ought to do something as good as that, she perked up."

(The story was an interview with a woman who had killed her husband. Peggy, trained by Editor Perkerson, to use a striking quote for a beginning, started the story, "I killed him because I loved him," which startled the other city room reporters as much as it, presumably, did the *Journal's* readers.)

That was the kind of a reporter that Peggy Mitchell was —an eager beaver, in today's slang, eager and willing to tackle any story, to do it honestly and earnestly—to take the work, but not herself, seriously.

She made good in a hard trade—a trade harder then than now, because in those days there were no such things as 40-hour weeks and overtime. And reporters were not authorized to take taxis or U-Drive-It cars on their assignments. They were expected to ride the street car to the nearest stop—and then walk.

Because she took the jobs as they came, without undue complaint and with enthusiasm, Peggy was accepted by her fellow *Journal* workers, even the crusty curmudgeons of the composing room and the extremely individualistic independent photographers of those pre-candid camera days. She was a particular favorite of a somewhat acrimonious photographer who accompanied her on many assignments, the late Walter Sparks, who was very strict with the *Sunday Magazine* women reporters, often lecturing them on what they should wear and how they should behave on assignments. But he and Peggy became fast friends—and she wept unashamedly at his funeral.

Atlanta newspapermen of the present and immediate past generation remember Peggy Mitchell as a capable fellow craftsman in the office, as a gay and buoyant spirit outside the office, quick to share joys, equally quick to share the burden of misfortune, trivial or tragic.

As a member of the immediate past generation of Atlanta *Journal* reporters, I remember distinctly—and will always remember—my first impression of Peggy Mitchell. It was in May, 1924, when I had just come to the *Journal's* busy but dingy city room as a very wet-behind-the-ears cub, slightly exposed to professional newspapering for a few months in Nashville. Along with other cubs I was being put through a pretty rough course of sprouts by City Editor Branch, a super trainer of reporters. While we went through the often dreary daily grind of writing—and re-writing again and again and again—obituary notices, civic club reports, police items—all the minor bits of news that fall to the lot of the cub reporters—a tiny, reddish-haired, electric-eyed sprite from the *Sunday Mag* department from time to time would come in to look up words in the big dictionary beside the city desk. She was so small that she would have to stand on tiptoe and lean over the big book, often exposing an inch or so of white skin above tops of her rolled stockings. When that happened, in those days when legs were not the public ocular property they are today, there would be considerable mis-typing and slowing down in production on the part of the young reporters. This soon caught Mr. Branch's alert eye. He stopped it by calling our visitor to his desk, and saying, in the most fatherly fashion: "Miss Peggy, I'll have to ask you to stop using the dictionary—you're upsetting my young men."

That was my first glimpse of Peggy Mitchell—a piquant glimpse of a gay-hearted but serious minded sprite who came into our work day and made it brighter while she sought to make her work brighter by seeking the right word for the right place in her stories.

In a way, that action was indicative of the way Peggy Mitchell went about her job of newspaper writing. She was a stickler for accuracy. She wanted the word as well as the fact to be correct. She served her apprenticeship well and wrote stories that you wanted to read all the way through. In them were little factual flashes of the artistry that blazed into lasting flame when she turned her talent to fiction—and produced a story which I have heard discussed around the world—in places as far apart as the Khyber Pass and the Yukon valley of Alaska.

In her professional work, Peggy was an honest, intelligent craftsman. She had the ability of making the person whom she was interviewing, whether it was a North Georgia hillsman or a foreign prince, feel at home when she was talking to him, and feel that she was interested, above all, in what he was saying. That is how she obtained good interviews—by a high type of intellectual infiltration.

Outside the office, I remember Peggy as the center of a group of young men and women who had to rely on imagination and ingenuity, not on cash (for none of us made any real folding money in those days) for amusement. I remember the Sunday afternoons when we all gathered at a musty apartment occupied by two young *Journal* reporters—to talk late into the night on subjects trivial and serious. And I remember distinctly how Peggy was one of the bright spots of these gatherings, with her sharp wit pinning arguments down to facts.

I also remember one gay evening when a group gathered at Peggy's home on Peachtree Street and decided, on the spur of the moment, to hold a costume party, to make costumes of what we could find in the house, and then to go out and kidnap the first two pedestrians we could find to act as judges of the costumes. And I remember the fun we had—and Peggy's bubbling laughter when two bemused tourists were hauled in to judge as mad an array of costumes as was ever assembled.

Perhaps the best tribute to and most accurate description of Peggy Mitchell's work as a newspaperwoman was given the other day by another very capable newspaperwoman who worked right beside her in those years and who later achieved distinction as a fiction writer—Medora Field Perkerson, wife of the *Sunday Magazine* editor. Talking of those now far off newspaper days, said Mrs. Perkerson: "From first to last she was a good reporter in that she never made excuses and never fell down on a story. Her work was definitely creative and had that extra something which gives life and color to the simplest story. Because she genuinely liked people, they opened up and gave her the stories she wanted. It seemed to me that lots of young reporters who came on newspapers in those days felt they were superior to the stories they were assigned to write. Peggy never felt that way. Whether she was sent out to interview a preacher or a butcher or Tiger Flowers, she always sought to get the real story and the whole story."

And that's the real story of Peggy Mitchell's short but fruitful newspaper career—she was a good reporter.

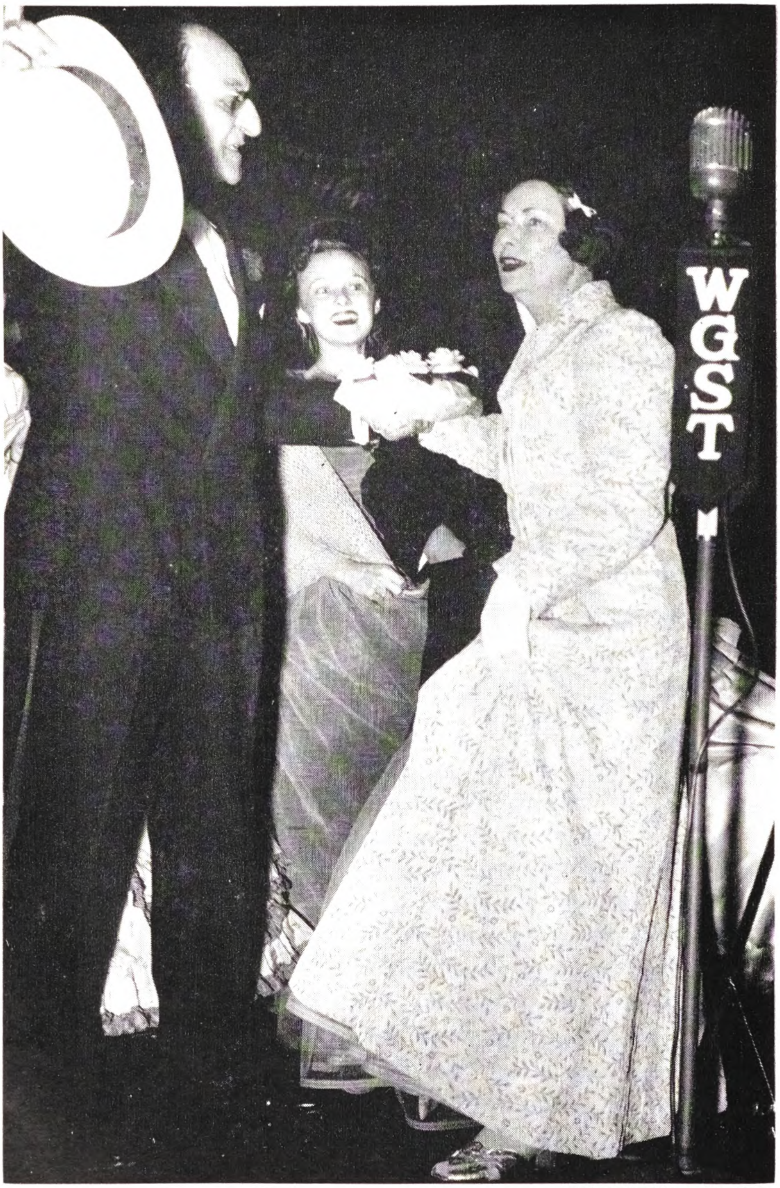


Photo by Lane Brothers

Here the author of "Gone With the Wind" arrives at Loew's Grand Theatre, Atlanta, for the premiere of the motion picture made from her novel, December 15, 1939. She is presented to the crowd by Mr. Julian Boehm.

GEORGIA GENERALS

FOR STONE MOUNTAIN MEMORIAL

By PEGGY MITCHELL

(Editor's Note—This issue honoring Margaret Mitchell would not be complete without something written by Margaret Mitchell herself. In 1925, it had been announced that each Southern state would be represented by five of its generals in the Confederate Memorial being carved on Stone Mountain by Gutzon Borglum. The grandiose plans for the Memorial failed, but one souvenir that remains is Margaret Mitchell's story of Georgia's five generals, a series of four articles in the *Atlanta Journal Sunday Magazine.* We have selected these articles for re-publication in the *Bulletin.* The articles attracted much favorable comment when they appeared in 1925. Notice the introductory paragraphs of the first article, below, and you will see that the *Journal* originally planned to publish only two articles. But the series ended up running four articles instead of two, and more space was allotted the latter articles than the first. Margaret Mitchell's first article had made the *Journal's* editors, and readers, ask for more. She had taken an assignment most reporters would dread and, instead of turning out a dully factual story, she had made Georgia's generals come alive.)

(This article from the *Journal Sunday Magazine* of November 29, 1925, and the other articles in this series, are published by permission of the *Atlanta Journal.* All rights reserved by the *Atlanta Journal.*)

Georgia has chosen her five Confederate generals to represent the state in the immortal granite of the Stone Mountain Memorial. The choice has been wise, and these five men, Generals John Brown Gordon, Ambrose Ransom Wright, Pierce M. Butler Young, Thomas R. R. Cobb and Henry Lewis Benning, all gallant soldiers, selfless statesmen and courteous gentlemen, deserve fully this honor of honors which grateful Georgia bestows upon them.

Following is a sketch of the lives of Generals John B. Gordon and Pierce M. Butler Young. Next Sunday, the *Journal's* magazine section will tell the story of the lives and achievements, both in war and in peace, of General Thomas R. R. Cobb, General Henry Benning and General Ambrose Ransom Wright.

GENERAL JOHN BROWN GORDON

General John Brown Gordon, the "Bayard of the Confederacy," whose equestrian statue now guards the entrance to the state capitol, and after whom Gordon Street, in Atlanta, was named, was a handsome man, pleasant of smile and possessed of great dignity of bearing. He was magnetic, drawing all hearts and eyes to him, and when he spoke, all others were silent to listen. A stranger coming into his presence could not but realize that he stood before a great man.

But the best summary of the hero is this—

"His men loved him—and so they followed him."

He was born in Upson County, July 6, 1832, the son of the Rev. and Mrs. Zacharia Gordon.

He entered the University of Georgia and graduated in the class of 1852. He read law and was admitted to the bar a few months later, and between the years of his graduation and the outbreak of the War Between the States, he practiced law, quietly but with success, after the manner of many young Georgians who were fated in after years to carve glorious names for themselves—and for the Confederacy.

When war broke out and regiments, companies and "legions" were being organized on all sides, the young lawyer entered the "Raccoon Roughs" as a private, but was speedily elected captain. In fact, within a year of his enlistment, with the "Raccoon Roughs," he was a full-fledged colonel. In December, 1861, he marched away with his men as lieutenant colonel of the Sixth Alabama regiment of the Rhodes brigade of General D. H. Hill's division.

The young soldier distinguished himself from his first brush with the enemy, but his spurs were won at the Battle of Seven Pines. General Rhodes, who was fiercely pressing the enemy, was seriously wounded at the crucial moment of battle, when victory and defeat hung in the balance.

General Rhodes was carried to the rear and, the command devolving on the senior colonel, young Gordon stepped into the command with coolness and thorough competency and led the brigade with the brilliancy and dash which characterized his whole career. He was only thirty years old at this time, and the whole Confederacy rang with applause and pride at the exploits of the daring young Georgian.

He commanded the brigade at Malvern Hill and, later, led it in the great charge of Hill's division against the Federal positions at Sharpsburg where the most desperate and bitter fighting of the whole war took place. The Confederate troops numbered approximately 60,000 and those under McClelland were nearly 105,000. It was in this "great drawn battle of the War" that the courage and endurance of the leader were displayed as never before.

No man who could still keep his saddle must leave the field, were the words of Gordon, spoken in the thick of the fighting, when with smoke swirling about his horse and blood streaming from two wounds, he refused to go to the rear. Urging his men on, a bullet pierced the top of his cap and then he was wounded again. Still he remained in the saddle, giving orders to couriers who dashed up through the smoke, as cooly as if he were in his own law office. But when the fifth wound came, he fell unconscious.

In recognition of his rare generalship and his matchless courage in remaining with his men, though bleeding from five wounds, he was promoted to the rank of brigadier general of the Georgia brigade which was composed of the 13th, 14th, 31st, 38th, 60th and 61st Georgia regiments. In this gallant brigade were the flower of Georgia, for here men of wealth and position fought as privates in the ranks, proud to wear fading grey and butternut uniforms—and to call Gordon their leader. Their worth was proved in the Battle of the Wilderness, when Ewell's corps struck Grant's lines. The Confederate tide swept up but swayed back, as the troops of General Jones faltered under the Federal punishment. The Confederate lines were broken and for the moment defeat, like a dark cloud, hung ready to break over the Confederate army.

But Gordon's brigade, thrown into the front, by the falling back of Jones' men, stood firmly and refused to give an inch. The Federals were repulsed and the Confederate lines reestablished. This was not the last evidence of Gordon's dashing leadership in this battle for, on the following day, with two brigades, he made a sudden attack on Sedgwick's position and drove the enemy from the works. In this sally he captured six hundred prisoners, among whom were General Seymour and General Shaler. For this exploit he won the praise and commendation of Lee himself.

But despite the brilliancy of this victory, the achievement for which the South loves Gordon the most is the incident at Spottsylvania Court House. Gordon was leading Early's division into the fight which, at the onset, seemed fated to be a Confederate defeat. General Lee rode quietly to the front and announced his intention of entering the battle at the head of his troops.

In all the history of the War, was there ever another cry so fraught with courage and with love of a leader as that which went up from a thousand throats—

"Lee to the rear!"

And Gordon, catching at his general's bridle added his voice to that of the men—

"Lee to the rear!"

Then, swept to heights by the courage of Lee, he turned to his men, crying, "Follow me!" and led the charge with such fury that the Federal troops were driven back from the base of "The Bloody Angle." For this charge he was promoted, a week later, to the rank of major general.

As a major general he fought through the Battle of Cold Harbor and then followed General Early in the brief campaign in Maryland. With Early he fought through the Shenandoah campaign and especially distinguished himself in a victorious engagement with Sheridan at Cedar Creek. Returning to the lines before Petersburg, he was assigned to the command of the Second Army Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia. Shortly after this he became a lieutenant general.

And then the sad days fell. In March, 1865, with half of Lee's skeleton army under his command, ill fed, badly equipped, he led a desperate sally and captured Fort Stedman, in front of Petersburg, and lines to the left and right of it. With reinforcements he could have held the position, but there were no reinforcements, and, lacking strength, he was forced to fall back.

What had happened in his command was happening all over the Confederacy—the spirit was valiant but the flesh was weary and hungry and the gaps in the ranks could no longer be closed up. Gordon held the last lines at Petersburg and maintained his position with the stubborn fierceness of a bulldog, over every inch of ground. He seemed never to sleep or to eat, for he was everywhere at all times.

In the fated retreat from Petersburg he again seemed omnipresent on the fighting line, a smile for the footsore soldiers, a handclasp and a word of cheer for the wounded and the weary.

It was Gordon who led the last charge of Lee's army at Appomattox.

His days as a soldier and a general passed, Gordon's usefulness did not end nor his wisdom falter. The surrender no sooner over, he marshaled his men and gave them advice, as a father might speak to many sons who were to fare forth into the world, far from his sight. They had fought well, he told them, defeat carried no stigma of shame with it. But the war was over and now they should go home in peace, obey the laws of the conqueror, rebuild the country and work for the future.

No other words could so well express the conduct of General Gordon, in the bitter days that followed the surrender. He went home and worked for the good of his state and his people. In 1866 he represented Georgia in what was known as the "National Union convention" in a futile effort to better conditions in the state. In 1868 he was Democratic candidate for Governor against Bullock and was, in all probability, elected but counted out.

It was 1873 before Georgia came into its own, out of the wreck of Reconstruction. Gordon was one of the candidates for senate, with Alexander Stephens, Benjamin Hill, A. T. Akerman and Herbert Fielder. Gordon was elected, and the recent soldier's career in the senate was notable, especially for his efforts to promote better feeling between the two sections of the country.

He was reelected to the senate in 1879, but resigned after a year of service in order to rebuild his fortune, for during his unselfish and untiring work for the state, his private affairs had fallen into a bad way. The president of the L. and N. railroad offered him the position of general counsel, which he accepted, and for the next few years he distinguished himself as a railroad builder, in connection with the Georgia Pacific railway.

But in 1886 he was again called from private life to serve Georgia, this time as governor. He took his seat as governor with an inaugural address that won praise from all over the union. The *New York Sun* remarked in an editorial that it was "worthy of Thomas Jefferson."

He was reelected governor in 1888, and in 1890 was again sent to senate. The United Confederate Veterans were organized during that year, and by unanimous vote, the commandership was given to Gordon. He held this post until his death, although he frequently protested that he had held it long enough and that some other man should have the honor.

His last term in the senate completed in 1896, General Gordon spent the remainder of his life in traveling and delivering his now famous lecture, "The Last Days of the Confederacy."

His death came in 1904, in Florida, where he had gone for his health, and his passing cast a pall over the whole nation, who now united to mourn and praise the "Bayard of the Confederacy"—a gallant gentleman and a perfect soldier, who added to his four years on the battlefield, thirty years of selfless service in civil life for the good of his state.

PIERCE BUTLER YOUNG—"BEAU SABREUR"

General Pierce Butler Young was the only one of the five generals selected by Georgia to be immortalized on Stone Mountain who was a soldier by profession.

Born at Spartanburg, S. C., Nov. 15, 1839, he attended school first at the old Georgia Military Academy, at Marietta, Ga., and then entered West Point. A few months before his graduation he resigned to join the army of the Confederacy.

He was a handsome man, of courtly manners and magnetic personality. Men followed him eagerly and without question, for in him the traits of a shrewd strategist and leader were mingled with the dashing temperament of a cavalryman. He was indeed the ideal cavalry leader, the "Beau Sabreur" of the Confederacy and ranks with Stuart, Forrest, Hampton and Wheeler as one of the great cavalry leaders of the southern forces.

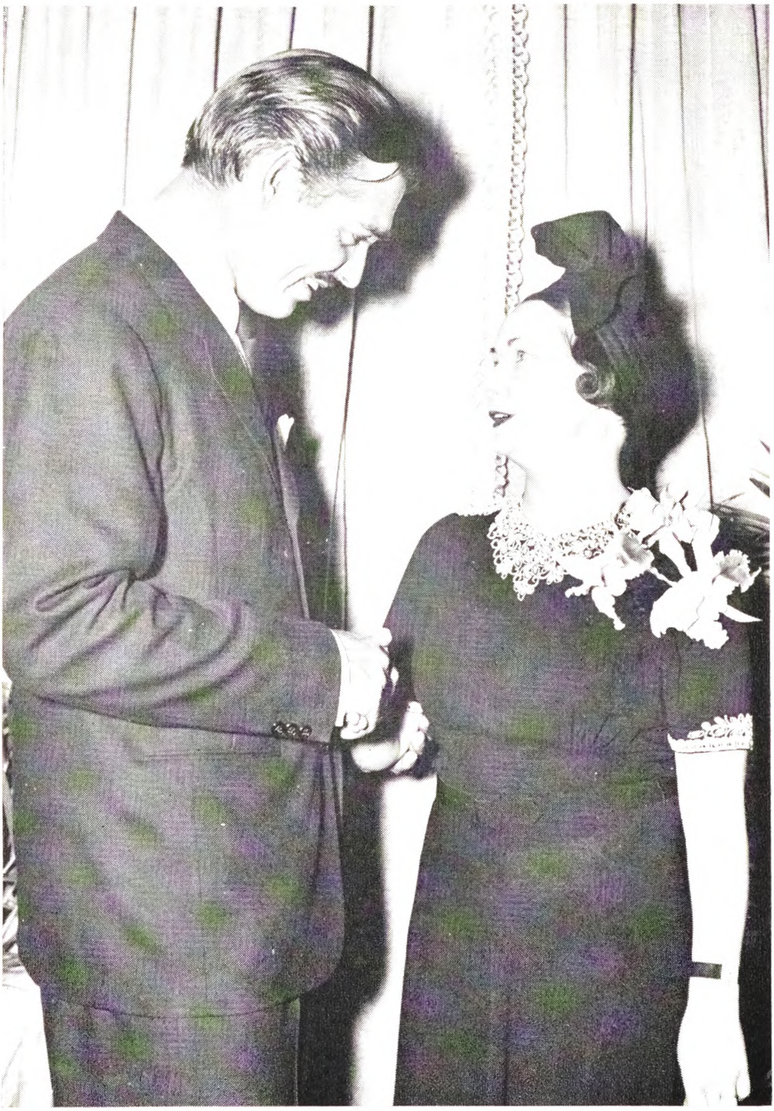
After resigning his West Point commission, Governor Brown offered him a first lieutenancy in the First Georgia infantry, which he refused, as he wished to take a second lieutenancy in the artillery. After his entry in the Confederate army, he served, in rapid succession, as engineer on the staff of General Bragg, at Pensacola, aide on the staff of General W. H. T. Walker, adjutant of Cobb's legion, lieutenant colonel of the Seventeenth Georgia infantry, colonel of Hampton's brigade of Stuart's cavalry, and brigadier general of Hampton's old brigade. By the time he had reached his twenty-fifth year he was a major general—the youngest man in the Confederacy to hold this honor.

His promotions came as a direct result of gallantry in action under the eyes of Stuart, who will live long in history as a smiling cavalier and a matchless cavalryman. At the battle of South Mountain, General Young led a desperate charge on the enemy and carried his men through their lines. He was wounded at the moment of victory and carried to the rear, but not before General Stuart had given him the highest praise and personal compliments. Before he had recovered from this wound his promotion to the rank of colonel arrived and after the Battle of Fleet Wood (or Brandy Station, as it is sometimes called) he was made a brigadier. His new command was composed of Hampton's old brigade, in which were the First and Second South Carolina regiments; the Cobb legion, the Jeff Davis legion and the Phillips legion.

Upon the death of General Stuart, when General Hampton succeeded to the command of the cavalry, Pierce Young temporarily succeeded to Hampton's command. However, in 1864, when Sherman was menacing Georgia, General Young was sent to Augusta to gather reinforcements to aid in the city's defense. He was promoted to major general before the defense of Savannah and, in the closing campaigns of the war, in the Carolinas, he again saw action under his old leader, General Hampton.

With the surrender of Lee, the spirits of the young general were not crushed. He came home to a state torn by reconstruction, and with the same dash and humor and bravery that had endeared him to his cavalrymen, he applied himself to bringing order out of the chaos in Georgia.

In 1868 he was elected to federal congress from the Seventh Georgia district, being the first representative admitted after the war from that district. He was reelected in 1870, 1876 and 1880. In 1878 he was commissioner to the Paris exposition, and in 1885 President Cleveland appointed him United States consul general to Russia. Ill health caused his return to America, and on his recovery, in 1893, President Cleveland gave him another foreign appointment, this time as minister to Honduras and Guatemala. But in Central America his health again failed him and he made a speedy return to the United States, anxious to return to his Georgia home before the end. But he died in New York City in 1896.



Clark Gable, the "Rhett Butler" of the movie, and Margaret Mitchell meet for the first time. The occasion was a reception given by the Atlanta Women's Press Club at the Piedmont Driving Club on the afternoon of December 15, 1939, preceding the movie premiere.

WHEN GENERAL COBB WROTE THE GEORGIA CODE

By PEGGY MITCHELL

(*Reprinted by permission from the* ATLANTA JOURNAL SUNDAY MAGAZINE *of December 6, 1925.*)

In the lives of most great men there is only one great achievement, one great moment. But in the life of General Thomas R. R. Cobb there were many great moments and three great achievements, all of which will live in history.

He codified the laws of Georgia.

He swept the state out of the Union and into the Confederacy by his eloquence.

He died in the sunken road at Fredericksburg after repulsing six attacks of Federal troops.

Thomas R. R. Cobb, son of John Addison Cobb and Sarah Robinson Cobb, was born in Jefferson County, April 10, 1823. When still a child, his parents moved to Athens, Ga., where they owned a large estate. The Cobbs were one of the wealthiest families in Georgia, owned wide acres of cotton, dozens of slaves, and were noted throughout the state for their culture and for their hospitality.

Thomas Cobb attended the University of Georgia and graduated with first honor in the class of 1841. He was brilliant in his studies and exemplary in conduct, for in his four years at the University he did not receive a single demerit or reprimand from his instructors.

Soon after his graduation, a financial depression swept Georgia, crashing many old fortunes, and the Cobb estate was one of the first struck. During this panic, cotton fell to three cents a pound, slaves to one-fourth of their value and even fertile land could find no buyer. The proud Cobb estate went under the hammer of the auctioneer and young

Tom Cobb went into the office of William L. Mitchell to study law. He was both quick and profound, and in 1842 when not twenty years old, he was admitted to the Georgia bar. After this he formed a quasi-partnership with his brother, Howell Cobb, but this was soon ended, for Howell Cobb went to Congress.

MARRIED MARION LUMPKIN

In January, 1844, Tom Cobb married Marion Lumpkin, daughter of Chief Justice Lumpkin, of Lexington, a girl not only beautiful of face and of personality, but of a Christian character that had a marked effect on the life of the future general. It was through Marion Lumpkin Cobb that he became interested in the work of the Presbyterian Church and Sunday School and in the Georgia Temperance Society.

He was elected vice president of the Temperance Society, was made assistant secretary of the senate, and was offered an appointment on the staff of General Taylor. This last he refused, saying that he had no desire for any fame save in his own profession.

As the years went on, Tom Cobb advanced in his profession by leaps and bounds, until he became the most brilliant legal light in Georgia. He studied the genius of the law and was never a case lawyer; he sought to know what was right and then found a law for it. A wide reader, he soon became cognizant with all the old statutes that had been handed down in Georgia since Colonial days. He was made reporter of the Supreme Court, in 1849, and it was while holding this office that he was appointed by the General Assembly of Georgia, with two other men, to codify the state laws. To Cobb's lot fell the civil and criminal laws.

His work, slightly revised and amended, still remains the Georgia Code and is one of the most remarkable pieces of legal work ever executed, for Cobb did for the laws of Georgia what Justinian did for the laws of Rome. Up until this time, the laws of Georgia had been in a somewhat disorganized state, consisting, as they did, of all the old Common Law, the statutes passed by the Legislature since Georgia began, and the decisions of the Supreme Court. In order to find anything, lawyers were forced to wade through all of these hundreds of records and old papers.

CODE UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED

Cobb brought order out of this chaos. His knowledge of the Roman Law, of the Code Napoleon, his wide studies of our own statutes, familiarity with Supreme Court decisions, supplemented by a judicial conscience, enabled him to do in a year what no other man could have done in ten. He condensed, changed the verbiage, simplified the expressions, and constructed definitions.

So overjoyed and amazed was the assembly at such erudition and at the enormous amount of ground covered in so short a time that they unanimously adopted Cobb's code and made it the Code of Georgia. This state was the first to have a Code and is still one of the few in the union enjoying so compact and lucid an exposition of its laws.

Being a prolific writer, Tom Cobb produced many other literary works, of both religious, political and legal character. His "Cobb's New Digest of the Laws of Georgia," published in 1851, is still one of the most valuable law books of the state. His "Cobb on Slavery" is the only book extant which gives a complete comprehensive and accurate view of slavery both from the historical and legal aspects. "Letters of an Honest Slave Holder to an Honest Abolitionist," was copied all over the world, even in the Bombay (India) "Courier." "Religious Papers" were a true reflection of the Christian character of the man.

Cobb founded Lucy Cobb Institute for Girls, at Athens, Ga., and was its mainstay in its early days. He was a trustee of the University of Georgia for many years and, while occupying this position, urged state-wide free education for grammar schools, secondary schools and colleges. In the lines of law, education, literature, and religion, this remarkable man had already made, before 1860, a name that would have lived in history, even had he died before the War Between the States broke out.

SECESSION CONVENTION

On January 16, 1861, the Georgia Secession Convention met to decide the fate of the State. Here, according to those who were privileged to see this fateful convention, occurred a "battle of the giants" when those favoring the secession movement spoke against those who desired to settle amicably the differences between the north and south without severing the Union.

Alexander Stephens, Johnson, Means, and Hill spoke with fervor, advocating some manner of compromise for both sections. Cobb, Nisbet, Toombs, Reese and Bartow rose, with fiery eloquence, and harangued the convention for states' rights. Although all the speeches made rang with sincerity and with conviction, none swept the delegates as did that of Cobb. It was Cobb's impassioned oration that carried Georgia out of the Union for the keynote of it all was this:

"We can make better terms out of the Union than in it!"

"And this one sentence," said Alex Stephens, after the convention was over, "did more toward taking Georgia out of the Union than all the wordy speeches that went before!"

Cobb's enthusiastic eloquence, like Patrick Henry's, "Give me liberty or give me death!" changed the fate of a state, and Georgia voted for secession. After the convention, Cobb returned to Athens and organized Cobb's Legion, a body comprising three branches—cavalry, artillery and infantry.

Thomas Cobb had had no previous military experience. He was not of a war-like nature, for all his instincts were those of kindliness and dignity. But he studied the manuals of his three branches of the service as thoroughly as ever he did his law books, and so competent did he become that General McGruder gave him high praise.

MADE BRIGADIER GENERAL

In 1862 Colonel Cobb was promoted to brigadier general, for his handling of men in action surpassed even his handling of cases in court. He was a stern disciplinarian, yet a just officer. His soldiers knew that the general would take care of them—knew, too, that General Cobb would never order them into any dangerous place unless he was at their head—nor would he enjoy comforts and privileges that his men could not share.

The brilliant career of this Georgian came to a close on the fatal day in December, 1863, at Fredericksburg, on the old Sunken Road where thousands of others lost their lives. His brigade was stationed behind a stone wall in the old road, the target of six consecutive attacks by Federal troops. Far away across the battlefield stood "Old Federal Hill," the girlhood home of General Cobb's mother. It was from this old house that she had married and it was in the yard of the estate that the Federal batteries were planted—the batteries that were raining on Sarah Robinson Cobb's son.

General Cobb had dismounted from his horse, in one of the intervals of fighting, and was walking down the road behind the wall, encouraging the men, giving orders for the removal of the wounded, checking up, with saddened heart, the number of dead in the Sunken Road, when a bullet struck him. It severed a femoral artery and the general lived only a little while, dying on the battlefield with the roar of the guns in his ears.

Perhaps General Robert E. Lee summed up the Georgia hero better than anyone else—

"Of his merits, his lofty intellect, his accomplishments, his professional fame, and above all his Christian character, I would not speak to you who knew him so well. But as a patriot and a soldier, his death has left a gap in the army which his military aptitude and skill render it hard to fill."

GENERAL WRIGHT

GEORGIA'S HERO AT GETTYSBURG

By PEGGY MITCHELL

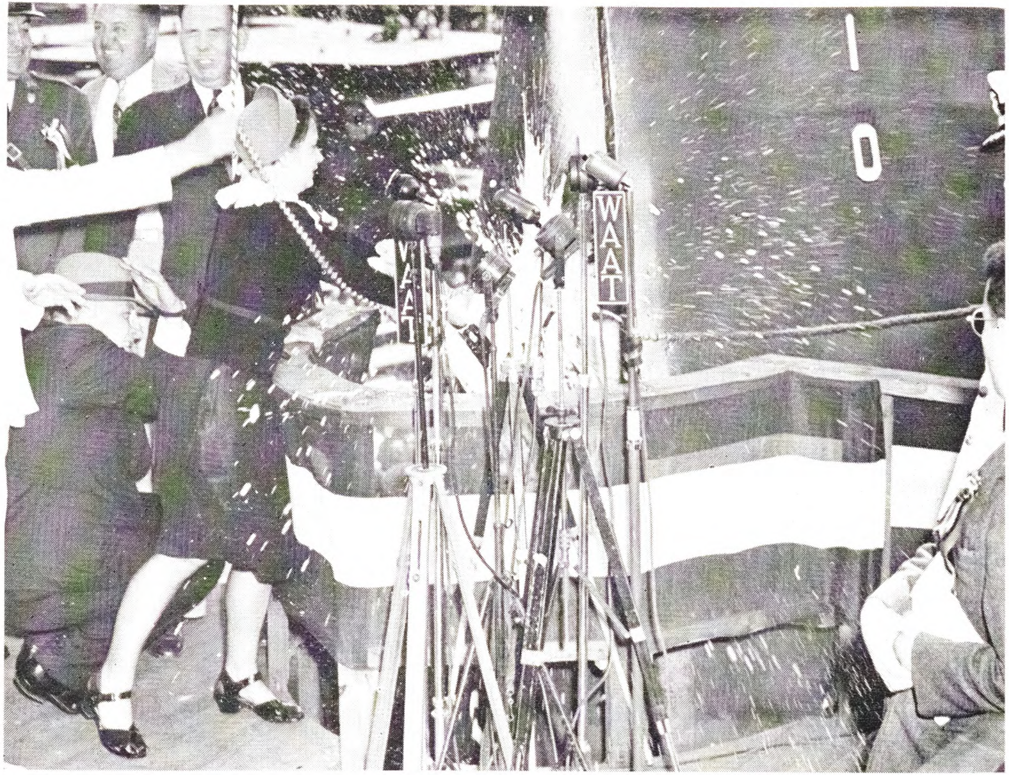
(*Reprinted by permission from the* ATLANTA JOURNAL SUNDAY MAGAZINE *of December 13, 1925.*)

Ambrose Ransom Wright, soldier, orator, statesman, lawyer and editor, died at the comparatively youthful age of 46 years, having accomplished more in the service of his state, both in civil and military life, than most men could in a century.

Born at Louisville, Jefferson County, Georgia, April 26, 1826, the first son of Ambrose and Sarah Hammond Wright, he displayed from earliest youth great mental precocity. At the age of 14 he read law, under Hershel V. Johnson (later governor), and showed a marked aptitude for legal things. When seventeen years old he married Mary H. Savage, daughter of Dr. William Savage, of Augusta, Ga., and half-sister of Annie Polk, Johnson's wife.

Because of the extreme youth of the couple both families objected strenuously to the wedding, but the young groom, in no way disheartened by parental disapproval, bought a small tract of land on which stood a cabin and here brought his young bride. He continued his legal studies and read law by the light of flaring pine knots until he had learned enough to be admitted to the bar.

He practiced both in Dooly and Jefferson counties, with more success than is usually attained by young lawyers and was well on the way to legal prominence when the death of his father, in 1850, brought him a large share of the Wright estate. After ten years of married life the young wife of Ambrose Ransom Wright died, and in 1857 he married a second time, Carrie Hazlehurst, daughter of Robert Hazlehurst, of Brunswick. During the years between 1854 and 1860 he distinguished himself notably in his profession and became especially famed for the brilliance of his oratory, both in law courts and in the political world.



International News Service Photo

She had a powerful wallop when she put her back into something. Here she soundly smacks the cruiser "Atlanta" with the champagne bottle at its launching, Kearny, N. J., September 6, 1941.

COMMISSIONER TO MARYLAND

When the first small clouds of the coming war rolled upon the horizon Ambrose Ransom Wright came out in favor of secession. Lincoln's election having precipitated the south into turmoil, Wright was sent as commissioner to the Maryland legislature then in session in an effort to bring that state into the Confederacy. The people of Maryland were, for the most part, sympathetic to the cause of the south, but their chief executive, Governor Hicks, shrewdly maneuvered matters until Federal troops had overrun the state and there was no chance for the fiery eloquence of Wright to take effect.

The Georgian returned home and enlisted as a private in the Confederate Light Guards, of Augusta, which was one of the companies of the Third Georgia Regiment. Almost immediately they were ordered to Portsmouth, Va., and there, in April, 1861, Ambrose Ransom Wright was elected colonel of the Third Georgia Regiment and joined the brigade of General Albert C. Blanchard.

The gallant record of the Third Georgia Regiment is well known, but perhaps the best recommendation it ever received was that of the Confederate congress, in a joint resolution bestowed in 1864.

> "Resolved by the Congress of the Confederate States of America, That the thanks of Congress are due and are hereby tendered to the officers and men of the Third Georgia Regiment, through its representatives in Congress, who were the first to leave their state to battle on the soil of Virginia, whose gallant dead have been left on many of her historic battle fields, which entire regiment, to a man, has cheerfully and unanimously reenlisted for the war, resolving as they were the first to take up arms in the cause of Liberty and Independence, they will be the last to lay them down.
>
> "Approved, February 15, 1864."

ATTACK ON ISLAND

Ambrose Ransom Wright, like General Cobb and General Benning, his brothers-in-arms, who will be carved on Stone

Mountain, had had no previous military experience when he enlisted, but, like Cobb and Benning, he quickly applied himself to the study of the military manuals and soon perfected himself. He looked every inch a soldier, for he was of impressive and commanding mien. A stern disciplinarian, he nevertheless was absolutely just in his judgments and his men respected him, knowing that they would one and all receive impartial treatment from him.

His first active service came in the fall of 1861, when he carried off brilliantly the raid on Chicamicomica Island. This island, off the North Carolina coast, was held by the Federals, and here they had gathered a large supply of army stores. Colonel Wright, with two companies of Confederates, secured a small Confederate steamer and attacked the island.

The federal steamer "Fanny," loaded with munitions and supplies, was captured just before the party landed and this whetted the appetites of the attackers. The federal troops made a stand when the attack opened, but soon fell back into the marshes, losing a number of men and several hundred stacks of arms. It was in this encounter that the personal bravery as well as the leadership of Wright was apparent, for while the federal rout was in progress he spurred his horse after four of them and demanded their surrender. They replied with pistol shots, killing his horse, but undismayed, he sprang from the ground and seizing one of the federals drew him against his breast, and using him as a living shield, brought about the surrender of the other three. His gallantry on this occasion won the complete confidence of both officers and men and the highest praise from General Blanchard.

One of the best examples of the cool nerve of Ambrose Ransom Wright was his exploit at Elizabeth City, then occupied by federal troops. The exact strength and intentions of the enemy were unknown and it was imperative that they be discovered immediately. Colonel Wright and Major Lee, of the Third Georgia, volunteered to perform this dangerous duty, and, changing their uniforms to civilian clothes, they entered the city. For some hours they remained there, talking freely with citizens and soldiers and then, eluding the pickets, made their way out of the federal lines, where capture would have meant the most ignominious type of death.

PROMOTED TO BRIGADIER GENERAL

Shortly after this he returned to Virginia and was in the retreat from the Peninsula before the army of McClelland. After this he engaged in the Seven Days' Battle Around Richmond and when this bloody fighting was done, the gallant Georgian received a promotion and became a brigadier general.

His command was attached to the division of General Huger and fought through the battles of Frasier's Farm, Gaines' Mill, Malvern Hill and James River Landing. In each of these engagements he distinguished himself both by his absolute fearlessness and his efficient generalship.

After Malvern Hill his brigade followed the enemy on the retreat into Maryland and then met the federals at the Second Battle of Manassas, where Lieutenant William A. Wright, son of General Ambrose Ransom Wright, now comptroller general of Georgia, lost his leg. In this battle General Wright had his second horse shot from under him, but, fortunately, escaped injury. He was not so lucky at Sharpsburg, where historians agree the bloodiest fighting of the war took place, for here, after losing his third horse, he was wounded in the breast and the leg. He was carried from the battlefield on a litter, bleeding but protesting that his place was with his men. It was some while before his men saw him again, for the wounds were dangerous enough to send him home on a furlough.

Returning home barely long enough to be healed, he returned to Virginia and was assigned to Anderson's division, A. P. Hill's corps. This division saw eight days' fighting around Chancellorsville in May, 1863, and it was during this desperate fighting that Wright's brigade drove the enemy from their first and second lines of breastworks and captured an entire regiment, including the colonel, lieutenant colonel, major, adjutant and many cannon. On the day following this, Early's and Anderson's divisions, with Wright's brigade in advance, charged the enemy in their position on the River road and routed them, winning the compliments of General Lee, under whose eyes this charge was made.

CHARGE AT GETTYSBURG

It was in this successful engagement that General Wright received his third wound, in the knee, from a piece of shrapnel. During the summer following he went with the army into Pennsylvania and there took part in the Battle of Gettysburg.

If for nothing else in his whole career, General Wright would live in history for his achievements on the hills of Gettysburg. Here he accomplished—and failed—gloriously in the same attempt Pickett made upon the second day of the battle. Both men scaled the heights, although Wright penetrated farther—and both were compelled to retreat down the slope for want of reinforcements. General Lee, in an official report, gave a description of this feat, which was vivid even though couched in the terse military phraseology:

> " . . . About 4 p. m. Longstreet's batteries opened and soon afterwards Hood's division, on the extreme right, moved to the attack. McLaw's followed somewhat later, four of Anderson's brigades—those of Wilcox, Perry, Wright and Posey—supporting him on the left, in the order named. The enemy was soon driven from his position on the Emmettsburg road to the cover of a ravine and a line of stone fences at the foot of the ridge in the rear. He was dislodged from these after a severe struggle and retired up the ridge, leaving a number of his batteries in our possession.
>
> "Wilcox's and Wright's brigades advanced with great gallantry, breaking successive lines of the enemy's infantry and compelling him to abandon much of his artillery. Wilcox reached the foot and Wright gained the crest of the ridge itself, driving the enemy down the opposite side. But, having become separated from McLaw's and having

gone beyond the other two brigades of the division, they were attacked on both flanks and in front and compelled to retire, being unable to bring off any of the captured artillery."

In the whole history of the War there is no more stirring or heroic incident than that of General Wright charging up the green slopes, slippery with blood, with his yelling men behind him. Sword in hand, he led the advance, amid a rain of bullets and swirl of cannon smoke that would have daunted a less fearless man than he. But fear seemed never to have entered his heart, for, calling to the color bearer to follow close, he waved his sword and cried to his men—"Come on! Follow me! Do you want to live forever?" (This cry was attributed to a Marine officer at Belleau Woods in the late war, but veterans of Gettysburg agree that it first sprang from the lips of the Georgia general.)

BEST FIGHT OF WAR

Sometimes he turned his back on the enemy to harangue his men, climbing the slope backwards, calling for the flag to follow after him as banner-bearer after banner-bearer fell and the standard was snatched by willing hands before it touched the earth. They reached the top of the ridge, sprang over the captured guns, cheering as the enemy retreated down the opposite side of the hill. But even in the moment of seeming victory, they stood alone, having outstripped all support. The federal batteries on all surrounding elevations focused their fire on Wright's men, and the top of the ridge becoming an inferno, the remnant of men fell back.

After the retreat began, Wright's brigade still further distinguished itself, for it was left to guard Manassas Gap until General Ewell could bring up his troops. So well did he perform his task that General Ewell exclaimed that Wright's brigade had "made the best fight of the war."

In the fall of 1863 General Wright ran for the state senate and was elected. In November of that year he took his seat in Milledgeville and was the winning candidate in the race for president of the senate. As senator he supported with great zeal every measure tending to strengthen the Confederacy and to prosecute the war with greater efficiency. Upon the adjournment of the legislature he returned to the front and resumed command of his brigade.

From the Battle of the Wilderness to the lines before Petersburg, Ambrose Ransom Wright acquitted himself with untiring energy and unflagging courage and one coup, executed by him, stands out as one of the most brilliant of the war. While in front of Petersburg he stormed and captured an enemy trench and then, turning, doubled up the flank of one of their army corps and captured more prisoners than he had in his whole brigade. It was during this battle that another horse was shot from under him, making the fourth that he had lost.

At the close of this campaign serious illness, aggravated by old wounds, compelled him to return to Georgia, where he was placed in command of the post of Augusta. In the fall of 1864 President Davis sent him his commission as a major general and in this capacity he was present at the siege of Savannah and the subsequent retreat from that town. When the last sad days came General Wright was with Johnson in North Carolina, and there surrender took place.

HIS BEST SPEECH

The war was over and Ambrose Ransom Wright, with thousands of others, saddened by defeat, hastened home. But on reaching Augusta he found disorganization and misery. Thousands of tired soldiers, tramping home from Appomattox, had thronged the city, hungry, half-clothed and bitter in defeat. The city had attended to their wants as best it could, but the numbers had grown to such proportions that there was hardly food enough for the inhabitants. At the time General Wright came home, Augusta was in the hands of a mob that was wrecking shops and opening warehouses in order that they might enjoy things of which they had been so long deprived. Some of the soldiers had found a storehouse of whiskey and the mob was beginning to be ugly and ominous. Women and children cowered frightened behind locked doors while the mob thronged the streets, yelling and breaking into stores.

General Wright sprang upon a dry goods box on Broad Street and there, according to witnesses, made the best speech of his life to "Soldiers of Bob Lee," as he called them. His ringing voice, his commanding figure, the eloquent sincerity of his plea that the unstained reputation of the Confederate soldiers be unmarred by lawless conduct, had the right effect. The mob knew him and his record, cheered him, and, putting back much of the looted goods, left for their homes.

Having saved the fortunes of Augusta, General Wright turned his attention to his private fortunes, which had fallen into a disheartening state. When he marched away with the Third Georgia he had left behind a law practice not surpassed in the state, wealth and property. When he returned home, he found all swept away except his home. For the first six months after the surrender he worked, as he had in his early youth, with his hands, in order to feed his family—and his lot was no uncommon one, for many a wealthy southerner put his hand to the plow in actuality, after the war, following behind the horse that had borne him from Appomattox.

In the beginning of 1866 General Wright reopened his law office in Augusta with Judge Gibson as his partner, but this only lasted a short while until the judge went on the bench. In March, 1866, Henry Moore purchased the *Chronicle and Sentinel*, and made General Wright one of the editors of the paper. Due to mismanagement of a former owner, the circulation of the paper had dropped to almost nothing. But General Wright was one of the best known men in Georgia and one of the most popular, and in a short while the circulation had jumped astoundingly. In the bitter reconstruction days the *Chronicle and Sentinel* and its editors fearlessly fought for the rights of the southern people and denounced the carpet bag rule, until finally they saw the state emerge from oppression.

In 1872 General Wright was sent to the state convention of Democracy and by that body elected a delegate from the state at large to the Baltimore convention. Later he received a nomination for congress from the Eighth district. There were strong rivals in the field against him, but General Wright "stumped" every county in the district, making hundreds of friends wherever he went. When election day arrived, General Wright won the race by nearly 3,500 majority.

However, the general did not live to serve his term, for he died shortly after his election. The press of the nation mourned his passing. Even the northern papers, which only a few years before had blazed with bitterness, now said that Georgia's greatest man had gone to a well-earned reward. For he was a great lawyer, splendid citizen, a chivalric gentleman—and he served his generation well.

Photo by Kenneth Rogers

Margaret Mitchell at the time of publication of "Gone With the Wind" in 1936.

GENERAL BENNING
HERO OF "BURNSIDE'S BRIDGE"
By PEGGY MITCHELL

(Reprinted by permission from the ATLANTA JOURNAL SUNDAY MAGAZINE *of December 20, 1925.)*

Henry Lewis Benning, after whom Fort Benning, at Columbus, Ga., was named, was the son of Pleasant Moon and Malina Meriwether Benning. Born April 2, 1814, he moved with his family at an early age to Harris county, where he attended Dr. Beman's school. He entered as a sophomore at Franklin College (later the University of Georgia), from which he was graduated with first honor in 1834.

In 1835 he was admitted to the bar at Columbus, Ga., and in 1837, became solicitor general of the circuit. While solicitor general, he married Mary Howard Jones, daughter of Col. and Mrs. Seaborn Jones. In 1853, when only 39 years old, he was elected to the supreme bench, being one of the youngest men in the state to ever hold such a position. He served six years in this capacity and then resumed his practice.

When the election of Lincoln threw the south into a tumult, Henry Benning was one of the first in Georgia to lift his voice in favor of secession. In 1861 he was appointed commissioner to the Virginia convention and was instrumental in passing the Secession ordinance. His eloquence, his obvious sincerity as he spoke in behalf of secession swept his hearers into enthusiasm. Returning home, after having accomplished this, he waited not a moment to join the army. Although middle-aged and therefore not subject to call, Henry Benning raised a regiment, was elected colonel and left immediately for Virginia, where his command was numbered the Seventeenth Georgia in Toombs brigade.

"Old Rock," as he came to be called by his men, made a remarkable soldier. He had had no previous military experience and had come from the quiet ranks of civil life, yet he applied himself to the business of being a soldier as he had that of lawyer and he succeeded equally in both. He was a strong, solid soldier, courageous and just. He never commanded his soldiers to do anything which he himself would not do for "what's good enough for the boys is good enough for me."

"OLD ROCK"

After the first year of the war, "what was good enough for the boys" was generally pretty poor fare. Parched corn and yams, roasted acorn coffee, hours in driving rain, beds in the mud, and sleepless nights in the saddle, were what his "boys" were enduring, and they were what "Old Rock" endured with them.

Perhaps the most characteristic incident related of the General's courage and stubbornness occurred during the Battle of Chickamauga. Benning had been in the thick of the fight, directing operations, dispatching couriers and cheering on his men, seeming to bear a charmed life amid the deadly fire that was mowing down hundreds about him. His horse was killed. General Benning mounted another, proffered by one of his staff. When this mount fell mortally wounded, nearly carrying the General with him to the ground, Benning sprang clear of the dying animal, and, refusing the second horse offered him by an officer, ran back to where an army supply wagon stood. Hastily cutting one of the great animals from the harness, Benning mounted on its bare back, and galloping back to his position, urged on the fight with greater intensity.

Early in the war he was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General and given Toombs' old brigade, which was later atttached to Longstreet's corps. The tenacity and stubbornness of the commander seemed to communicate itself to the men, especially upon one occasion, when he held the bridge over Antietam creek, known as "Burnside's Bridge." Hour after hour he held the bridge, under the enfilading fire of Burnside's men, while wave after wave of Federals swept up toward the bridge and fell back. The loss among Benning's troops was enormous, but it is said that that of Burnside's was double. Finally, the Federals retreated and forded the water some distance down the creek. When "Old Rock's" men fell back they had only one round of ammunition left, but he brought up his other two regiments, the Fifteenth and Seventeenth Georgia, supplied them with more ammunition and returned to the fighting.

WOUNDED IN THE WILDERNESS

In the second day's fighting of the Battle of the Wilderness, General Benning was wounded in the shoulder. This bullet wound sent him home on furlough for six months. It proved very serious, and the General never fully recovered the use of his arm. Yet as soon as he was able to be about and to move his fingers, he returned to his men.

At this point, in the life story of General Benning, it is only just to mention his wife, for her story is intertwined with that of her husband. She was a tiny woman, frail and slight, but possessed of unusual endurance and a lion's heart. The battles she fought at home were those of nearly every Southern woman, but her burdens were heavier than most.

Left in complete charge of a large plantation, this little woman, who was the mother of ten children, was as brave a soldier at home as ever her husband was on the Virginia battlefields. She saw to it that the crops were gathered, the children fed and clothed, and the negroes cared for. To her fell the work of superintending the weaving and spinning of enough cloth, not only to clothe her own children and servants, but also Confederate soldiers. While her husband was away she buried her aged father, whose end was hastened by the war, comforted her sorrowing mother, cared for her bereaved sister-in-law, the widow of her brother, Captain J. A. Jones, and her brother's children, and nursed sick and wounded Confederate soldiers. And, hardest of all things in those trying days, she went three times to Virginia to bring home her own wounded.

She traveled to Virginia and brought home her husband on a litter, and after him her son, Captain Seaborn Jones Benning, a mere boy, whose health was ruined by his two wounds.

When Henry Benning recovered enough to return to his command he went into the Battle of Gettysburg, where, strangely enough, he was unhurt, although his regiment was the storm center at Little Round Top. He reorganized his shattered command after Gettysburg, cheered them on with his own indomitable spirit and fought through the rest of the war with the unyielding courage that shows his nickname to have been well merited.

SURRENDER AT APPOMATTOX

He was preparing to attack, at Appomattox, when a courier rode up with the news of Lee's surrender. The brave General, who had endured hunger and wounds and weariness with unfaltering courage, bowed his head in heartbreak, for defeat was the only blow that could bend his gallant head. But so great was his pride, as a soldier, that he lined up his ragged brigade in dress parade order and marched them to the rendezvous. Here he was able to say, "All present and accounted for, Sir," when Lee turned sad eyes toward him.

"Old Rock" went home and to conditions that would have broken the spirit of a lesser man than he. He found his home burned, his land in ruins, and, added to this sad state, the care of his own wife and large family, the widow and children of Captain Jones, and the orphaned children of his sister, Mrs. B. Y. Martin. But Benning never complained, even after the death of his wife, in 1867—surely as true a Confederate soldier as ever fell in battle.

Then, with the task of being father and mother and brother to so many girls, his only remark was, "I feel as though I had the world on my shoulders!"

He resumed his law practice, and some time after the war ran for judge against Dawson Walker and was defeated.

Later, when Governor Milton Smith offered the General an appointment to the Supreme Court bench, Benning refused it, preferring to continue his law practice. His practice grew again, as everyone loved and respected the General not only for his marked legal ability, but for his war record, his sensitive honor and his absolute integrity.

The entire south was shocked when on a July morning in 1875, he died while on the way to court to try a case. Praise came from both high and low and even the papers of his former foes had nothing but highest compliments to offer. His brothers in arms assembled in hundreds to do him honor and to pay tributes. Perhaps the most fitting of these came from a former soldier who had served under him—

"Now I know why the Tenth Legion loved Caesar!"

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MARGARET MITCHELL

IN PERSON, AND HER WARMTH OF FRIENDSHIP

By BLYTHE MCKAY

(Published in *The Macon Telegraph*, August 25, 1949, and reprinted by permission.)

Yesterday's papers carried stories about Margaret Mitchell's will, her bequests to her husband, John Marsh, to relatives, to friends, to institutions in which she was interested.

But none of the material possessions she named in her will can compare in value to the things she left to everyone who knew her at all well. She left among all her friends a great warmth around the heart at the thought of her gaiety, her humor, her tender compassion, her generosity, her unassuming modesty. She left them grateful that they had been lucky enough to know her, to share bright hours with her, to laugh with her.

For a number of years Peggy Marsh (and to me she'll always be Peggy Marsh, John Marsh's devoted wife, in spite of the fact that her maiden name is better known the world over because of her great book, "Gone With the Wind") was in Macon often for brief visits. Sometimes overnight, sometimes a week-end, but no matter how brief her visit, her arrival was always the signal for a gathering of a little group of friends.

Long before GWTW was published in 1936, chatter columns in this paper chronicled the delight with which friends greeted Peggy and John Marsh. A few months after it was published, there was a column claiming "Whenever Peggy Marsh comes down to Macon for one of her all-to-infrequent and all-too-brief visits, her friends here just get beside themselves with excitement. Book or no book, she's just the sort of person you'd break a leg to get to see if you had the slightest chance to."

Macon persons who knew Peggy loved her and those who didn't know her personally admired her greatly (same as

Photo by Lane Brothers

Margaret Mitchell and her friend, Mrs. Angus Perkerson. This was made at the time of the motion picture premiere of Mrs. Perkerson's novel, "Who Killed Aunt Maggie?"

everywhere, I guess), but Peggy always made friends feel that they were honoring her when all the time they felt highly honored by her presence here. Her modest nature also made her hopeful that her book would be popular, but kept her from being confident about it before publication. In July, after GWTW was published, she wrote of a column I had written about the book's happy reception in Macon:

"I came home from the mountains for a few hours to get some clean clothes and found a copy of your column and it made me prance with joy. Could you send me another copy? You see, I want to send it to Mr. Latham, the kind gent who bought my book. He is on his vacation now. I know he sees book reviews but not news stories or columns.

"When he was down here a couple of months ago I told him I hoped the New York papers would be kind but if the South didn't take the book, I'd just naturally die, and not give a hoot what the New York papers said. He kept soothing me as one would soothe a fidgetty horse, saying he believed Southerners would like it. So I want to send him your columns to show him he was right—at least as far as the *Macon Telegraph* columnist went.

" . . . I hope my friends in Macon will like the book. Macon and Macon people have always been so nice to me that now I understand completely why, during the war, Atlanta people always refugeed to Macon."

SPEECH HERE

The Macon Writers Club invited Peggy to be honor guest at its annual breakfast the month before her book was published. Maconites knew nothing about the book then except that there was going to be one, but Peggy made a talk at the breakfast and completely captivated everyone present with her own personality. Though all of that audience was especially eager to see the book after hearing her, they all had the feeling that whether GWTW ever came out or was any good at all, they'd had a rare and delightful experience just hearing Peggy.

Mrs. I. Hardeman Jones, now of Atlanta, was club president then, and in introducing Peggy said that the guest of honor was making "her first speech about her first book" on that occasion. She also said that the club had by bringing Peggy Marsh here, rescued her from the clutches of paper hangers, adding to Peggy, "You're not papering with rejection slips, I hope?" That question was answered later in Peggy's talk when she confessed that she didn't have a single rejection slip to her name and was quite upset about it.

Peggy talked to the Writers Club about what were the two most interesting points to her about a book . . . what makes a writer write a book and the sale of the manuscript.

Her story of "peace, war, reconstruction and a return to normal life" grew from her interest in three kinds of people, those who go down under stress, those who go through with flying colors and those who just manage to hold on.

When she was first sent to school and her family feared she would be the "only Mitchell not to take an education," her mother pointed out to young Margaret the results of "not taking an education." She took the little girl for a ride in a pony cart, Peggy recalled, out the Jonesboro road where chimneys of houses burned along Sherman's path still were standing.

Her mother, who "worked calculus and trigonometry for relaxation," showed her small daughter homes of charming, embroidering, china-painting belles, who after the war deprived them of their means, degenerated pitifully, showing her one of the women, and impressed on her the dire results of not taking an education. She explained to the child that about every 60 years there was an "upheaval" and that only the things people could do with their heads or with their hands stayed with them.

"So I decided to take an education and learned the multiplication tables as far as the sevens," explained Peggy with her characteristic turn to humor from a serious vein.

And from that early experience she obtained the interest in Georgians who did and didn't come through, which resulted in her novel.

She spoke of her first talk with the Macmillan Company editor about her book and her indignation when he asked if her story of the South was one of degeneracy. "No," she told him, "it is about tough, hard-boiled people who could take it on the chin."

PRIDE IN SOUTH

Peggy's pride in the South and Southerners was always evident.

Writing about a *Telegraph* column about Sue Myrick's departure by plane from Atlanta when she went out to Hollywood to be technical advisor for "Gone With the Wind" in January, 1939, Peggy spoke of the way Macon friends had been so excited and pleased about the trip and how they had all torn around helping Sue get off when the moment finally and suddenly came for her to leave.

She wrote, "I thought of a number of people in New York who have no idea that there is a world outside of New York, a world full of people completely different from New Yorkers. I wanted to send them your story and say, proudly, 'This is really the South, this represents the Southern towns where people have friends they love and appreciate, where everyone (including the telephone operators) may know everyone else's business but their interest is so genuine and affectionate that no one minds. This is where people have pride and unselfish pleasure in the good fortune of their friends.'

"Can you imagine people in the large Northern cities driving 96 miles to see a friend get on a plane? And wanting to bawl because that friend would be gone a few months? I don't think it would be possible."

It was Peggy, who when Sue was about to board the plane (she and John and Atlanta reporters and photographers had joined Macon friends at the Atlanta airport to see Sue off for Hollywood), it was Peggy who suggested we throw rice on Sue so she could shake it out in the plane and give her fellow-passengers something to wonder about —where was the groom? Unfortunately the airport restaurant only had grits.

"FORAGE CAP"

There has been a lot written since Peggy's death about her patriotic work during the war, her work for prisons, hospitals and persons in unfortunate circumstances. She herself, always busy with some project to help someone else, made light of what she was doing, shrugged it off if questioned.

When the war came, Peggy pitched right in on all sorts of things for the Red Cross. Less than 10 days after the fateful Dec. 7, 1941 Pearl Harbor attack there was a letter from her thanking me for a recipe.

Once when she was at a little party at my house Peggy spoke of an oyster concoction she had eaten when visiting her husband's relatives in Kentucky, and we thumbed through the Kentucky Cookbook to hunt for the recipe and couldn't find it. Later I found something that sounded like the dish she had asked about and sent it to her. It called for minced oysters—and she said "I wonder if I would have the courage to put an oyster through a meat chopper. In the first place, it seems a highly irreverent thing to do to an oyster, and in the second place, an oyster which had been through a meat chopper would be something to try the souls of strong men."

Because she had had flu and laryngitis at the time she hadn't tried the recipe, but her illness hadn't kept her from pitching right into war work the minute we got into war. She found herself, she wrote, making speeches to school children to raise money for the Red Cross, and was so hoarse she had to eat "pounds of cough drops."

"But the cough drops hold the attention of the children, so it's all to the good."

And in a P.S. "I should state that I am galloping about in an outdoor Red Cross uniform. The uniform isn't bad but the cap is terrible. Someone remarked that it was lucky my grandparents were dead, because if they saw me running around in a little model that looks like one of Sherman's cavalrymen's forage caps they'd let fly with their muskets."

LITTLE THINGS

With all the big things Peggy was interested in, nobody would have blamed her if little things escaped her, but they never did. She was the sort who would sit right down and write you a note if she liked a column you'd written. She did all the nice, friendly, kind little things other people think about and put off doing. If it was for her gaiety, her fine fund of stories told in her slow precise speech, her quick mind that friends enjoyed every briefest moment with her, it was for her generosity and thoughtfulness that they loved her.

Peggy Mitchell Marsh, who left a big book to the world, left a lot more to all her friends.

MARGARET MITCHELL
AND HER LAST DAYS ON EARTH

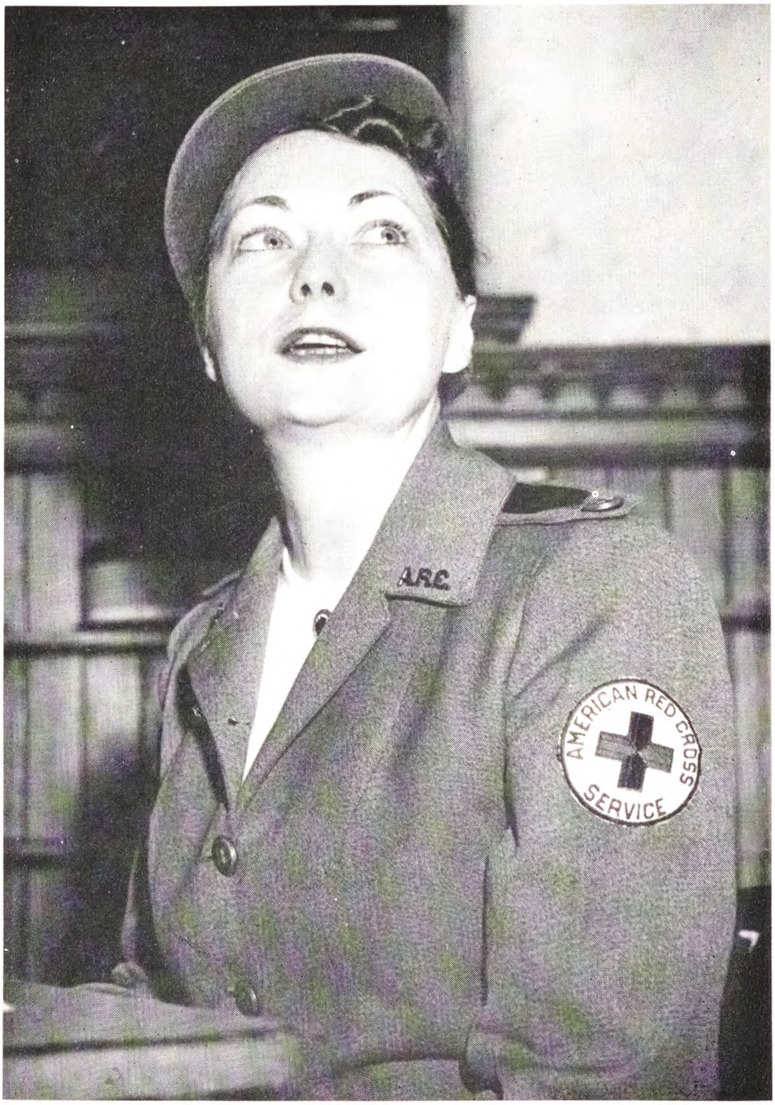
By William Key

Death came to Margaret Mitchell on August 16, 1949, at one minute before noon. Actually, life for the beloved author had ended some five days previously, for Miss Mitchell had lingered in the dark shadowland of coma from the moment she was struck down on Peachtree Street shortly after 8 o'clock on the night of August 11, to the instant of her final breath.

Even the most objective chronicler of the last days of this illustrious woman is irrepressibly drawn to a somber meditation on the seemingly inescapable aspects of the tragedy that cut short her life. Looking backward at the events from a distant, more unemotional perspective, it is difficult to avoid the illusion that some almost malevolent Nemesis seemed to have singled out Margaret Mitchell for a shockingly untimely—and agonizingly unnecessary—death.

The accident itself (and never was a word more inappropriate to describe the awful culmination of an act of grossest irresponsibility) occupied, from beginning to end, no more time than a swift, rolling thunderclap. In a conservatively estimated five seconds of anguished shock and horror, this warm-hearted, spirited woman—this homey, quick-to-laugh, youthful Margaret Mitchell, whose talent and intellect had combined to give to the world the grand true epic of the Great American Scene—was swept from the land of the living, into the veiled twilight of unconsciousness, at the end of which lay the eternal solitude of a too-soon grave.

To her grief-stricken family, to the stunned myriads of friends and acquaintances and those who knew her only by repute, the final five days and nights during which the courageous instinct of the stricken novelist fought unceasingly against a hovering and undeserved death, stand almost unmatched in the worldwide suspense manifested by a hor-


A.R.C.
AMERICAN RED CROSS
SERVICE

She was a worker in many war activities, and she really worked. Here she is in her Red Cross uniform.

rified public. Few other events in the first half of the Twentieth Century have been accompanied by such universal interest—possibly the closest comparative such period of general tenseness being those dark hours in May, 1927, when Charles A. Lindbergh, the "Lone Eagle" of American aviation, was somewhere above the misty, heaving bosom of the broad Atlantic—alone—while the whole world strained for news of him, in his history-making flight from New York to Paris. On that occasion, the question on the lips of everyone was: "Will Lindy make it?" . . . During the long drawn-out hours following the "accident" that laid Miss Mitchell low, the world waited, asking, "Will Margaret Mitchell pull through?"

Not only in the thousands of messages and telegrams pouring into Henry W. Grady Memorial Hospital—Atlanta's great sprawling public infirmary, where as a girl reporter Margaret Mitchell herself had written of accident and tragedy, and where now she lay, a pitiably small and grievously injured patient in Room 302—not only in those messages and telegrams, nor in the black, doleful headlines on the front pages of the American press, nor even in the hundreds of local and long-distance telephone calls from persons high and low in the social scale, but—more telling as a barometer of the shock and sadness which smote an entire nation—the hushed, simple questions of everyday people on street corners, in offices, on busses and trolleycars—the dramatic suspense was epitomized in the terse query: "Will she make it?" Certainly, from a strictly-measured point of general interest as evidenced in the newspaper columns alone, never in the generation which produced her was more anxiety evidenced over dying Pope or assassinated chief of state than was manifested during those fateful days when Miss Mitchell, bereft of consciousness, struggled in her brave but unequal fight for life.

Within minutes after Miss Mitchell's broken body had reached the Emergency Ward of Grady Hospital, it was apparent to medical examiners that she was gravely injured. The very first announcements described her condition as "critical." By the next day, however, she had rallied from the first stages of extreme shock—pulled out of a nose-dive toward death, so to speak—and it was thought by attending physicians that she might have a chance. Eminent specialists, young doctors on Grady's interne staff, trained nurses and their aides, were constantly at her bedside. In her extreme condition of weakness, surgery could not be attempted, but oxygen, blood transfusions, intravenous injections against shock and all other possible supportive measures were employed to help her in her fight. The next news from the hospital was that the noted patient had responded encouragingly to these measures, and the bulletins on the second and third days began to be tinged with an interlineal hopefulness that evoked a nationwide sigh of mitigated suspense.

FIGHT FOR LIFE

As has been previously noted, the scene of this dramatic life-and-death struggle was Room 302 of Atlanta's public hospital, a collection of old and weather-worn buildings of faded red brick and stone. Downstairs, a special telephone room had been set up to handle the flood of inquiries that came from white and colored, old and young, rich and poor, low and high. Personal friends of Margaret Mitchell were on duty there to answer the calls.

To those who telephoned or came personally to inquire, to the newspapers, press services and radio stations who were carrying hourly reports to the world beyond, the story of Margaret Mitchell's fight for life was given as it developed, step by step. Both John Marsh, husband of the injured novelist, and Miss Mitchell herself had been "newspapermen," reared in the tradition of the cool-headed newspaper reporter's creed that, good or bad, "news is news." Mr. Marsh had instructed that inquiries be answered without reservation, and he personally informed the newspapers at regular intervals of how things were proceeding. When he gave out the news that the condition of his famous wife was "hopeful," every reporter assigned to the story knew that he could get no more authentic or authoritative information; knew that John Marsh would never resort to "holding out" or "angling" the most unimportant development. Every progressive bulletin, the reporters and radiomen realized, was—in their language—"on the line."

At no time during her five days in the hospital was the condition of Miss Mitchell other than "critical"; at no time did she rally from the merciful coma. What hopefulness there was existed because, despite major injuries, she was holding on so well. X-ray photographs meantime had revealed fracture of the skull from the top of the cranium to the upper terminal of the spine. Her pelvis was fractured in two places, but apparently she had received no internal injuries.

The big question, then, was, how badly had her brain been damaged by the shattering blow of the speeding automobile; and that question could not be answered then, with her condition so precarious.

Through the afternoon and night of August 15 (Monday), Miss Mitchell was still holding on tenaciously, and the doctors' report was succinct and still hopeful: "At least no worse. Maybe a little better." But, during the next midmorning, Tuesday, August 16, there came a change for the worse, and events moved swiftly to their sad conclusion. Her heart action and respiration, which by their steady functioning had been a basis for hopefulness, began to fail. It became obvious that the condition of America's great novelist was desperate. As a last resort, after a hurried consultation among specialists, it was decided to attempt the delicate brain surgery which before had been considered too risky. Hurried preparations for the operation were made, but the little woman on the white hospital bed continued sinking rapidly. Before preparations for the operation were completed, an invisible Stranger had entered Room 302 at Grady Hospital. Margaret Mitchell was dead...

An autopsy revealed a marvel in physical resistance—the marvel that Miss Mitchell had lived through five days and nights after she was struck down. She had suffered severe brain damage when she was felled by the impact of the onrushing automobile. Nothing had kept her alive after that except the tremendous inner force and power that was Margaret Mitchell. She had held on for five days against almost impossible odds but, eventually and inevitably, the vital centers of the brain were overwhelmed, and she went.

Margaret Mitchell was 48 years old, young in heart and young in spirit, with many useful years ahead of her, but for the remarkably strange chain of events of that Thursday night, August 11, 1949, which seemed to direct her every footstep inexorably toward the doom which overtook her.

PUBLIC SHOCK

Her death having followed so closely upon the heels of the previous last "hopeful" bulletin about the noted author's condition, its announcement struck the general public with the impact of a bomb. But there was, in Atlanta, a noteworthy exception to the general unpreparedness for the sad word: In some mysterious manner, hours before the news was flashed over the radio stations and before the first edition of *The Atlanta Journal* appeared on the streets, Atlantans began telephoning the newspaper and radio offices. A flood of excited inquiries, "Is Margaret Mitchell dying?" began to pour in. To veteran newsmen, the thing was inexplicable, almost phenomenal.

The first definite information given to press and radio men as to the turn for the worse was at 11:30, or possibly a couple of minutes previously. The "death watch" that newspapermen maintain at or near the scene of a noted person likely to die, was immediately bolstered by the assignment of additional newsmen—special writers reputed for their accuracy—who kept telephone lines open to their city newsrooms.

Frank Daniel, veteran and able reporter for *The Atlanta*

Journal and longtime personal friend of Miss Mitchell, held the telephone line open at the hospital. At the *Journal's* city newsroom end of the line sat William Key, chief re-write man and narrator of this final chapter in the life of the beloved author, and also her friend of more than a score of years . . . As the big hand of the Western Union master clock in *The Journal* newsroom stood a fraction of an inch before the hour of noon, Frank Daniel spoke with soft tenseness: "Stand by, Bill!" To a veteran newsman's ears, there was far more drama in the almost toneless pitch of Daniel's voice than a more excited order would have conveyed . . . Then, as the tiny red light on the newsroom clock flashed the precise moment of noon, Daniel spoke once more—unexcited and quiet: "Margaret Mitchell is dead." Then, amid a deathly stillness: "Time of death—eleven fifty-nine a. m. . . . Repeating, time of death, eleven fifty-nine a. m."

Key cradled his phone, spoke the message to the city editor as it had been given to him by the hospital special reporter. Then, to notify the outside world, *The Journal's* chief re-write man called the Associated Press, answered an excited query from the United Press Atlanta bureau, confirmed the passing of the South's greatest writer.

THEN DULL SILENCE

Then, suddenly, in *The Journal's* newsroom, there fell a heavy, absolute silence—broken only by the ineffectual chattering of the teletype machines. For a full sixty seconds, one experienced the fantastic and contradictory sensations of being in a beehive of activity, and of witnessing all of that humming activity suddenly brought to a halt.

This involuntary cessation of sound and motion that closed down upon the newsroom came at the very instant when it had received a message of the kind that shakes a newspaper from top to bottom, that calls for "stopping the presses," for tearing apart the front page to make space for the bigger new story, for straining to get an "extra" upon the streets within half an hour. Margaret Mitchell's death was a news event of world-wide importance, but *The Journal's* people did not react to it as Hollywood might conventionally have pictured it—with confusion, excitement, shouting, running about. There was, for at least a minute, only this dull and empty and meaningful silence.

In those brief sixty seconds of untoward quiet, all those in the newsroom of *The Journal* realized with the swift shock of acceptance, that "Peggy" Mitchell had passed from the scene forever—that chatty, laughing "Peggy" who only a week or so previously had breezily sauntered in and out of the various news departments, passing the time of day with those for whom she bore an everlasting attachment, and they for her, was a part of dim, inevitable eternity.

* * *

At the beginning of this chapter, mention was ventured of the "seemingly inescapable" series of events which led to the tragedy that resulted in the passing of the woman esteemed as assuredly Georgia's most remarkable personage of the age in which she lived. It would appear *a propos*, therefore, to elucidate briefly to that point: Certainly the chronology of occurrences—simple acts of an everyday nature—tends to bear out the opinion that there are grounds for consideration of trivial happenings which, taken in conjunction with other occurrences, all led—or seemed to lead—Margaret Mitchell on a rendezvous with death on the fateful night of August 11, 1949. Certainly, too, it truthfully may be observed that any one of a dozen or more inconsequential deviations definitely would have made impossible the fatal conjunction with the speeding automobile which struck her down—had they happened.

For one thing, her decision to view "A Canterbury Tale," a motion picture being shown at the Peachtree Arts Theatre, was on impulse, not by previous plan. The day had dawned warm and still; it grew hotter by the hour, even in the airy, spacious apartment occupied by the noted author and her husband, at 1268 Piedmont Avenue, N. E., overlooking the lovely summer greenery of nearby Piedmont Park. And as the day wore into afternoon, the heat became almost insufferable.

Margaret Mitchell remarked to Mr. Marsh that she didn't feel well. Nothing definite, nothing so identifiable as a headache or other systemic complaint. She simply "didn't feel well," as perhaps hundreds or thousands of other women and men in Atlanta may have remarked that day about themselves. She had lain down for a while in the late afternoon and did not dress for dinner, but dined *en negligee.* During the course of that meal she suddenly remembered that friends had recommended "A Canterbury Tale" as an entertaining, worthwhile diversion. The air was then cooler and the sun's glare was out of her eyes, and she seemed to feel better after the uncomfortable day. She told her husband she would like to see the film, and they made the casual preparations incident to a man and his wife going to a theater only a few blocks from their home on a hot summer's evening. No fuss, no bother—no "dressing up."

The decision to go to the theater having been adopted—on impulse—there ensued what any observer might soliloquize upon as a chain of "omission of events" which, had any one or more intervened, would have left Margaret Mitchell to live out a perhaps full, certainly a deserved and useful life. But, alas, nothing did happen to slow up or speed up the precise timing of her last departure from her familiar apartment-home. Fate seemingly had synchronized the stop-watch of destiny with every subsequent movement made by the famous writer.

CHAIN OF EVENTS

It is indeed difficult to resist such soliloquy: Such a trivial thing as a woman making those little last-minute or final-second examinations of a pair of hose, to see whether a "run" had sprung, or to have gone back for a forgotten handkerchief, would have thrown the seconds of doom out of timing. A dropped door-key, a recollection of one final word for her house-servant—an impulsive but completely feminine peek into a mirror once more, the desire for a glass of water—any one of these meaningless but habitual acts of a woman going out to a movie, would have dissynchronized the ticking of Fate's deadly chronometer that August night.

Margaret Mitchell drove the car the short distance; she was the "family chauffeur." She pressed the starter and the engine caught up instantly. One asks, Why, this one time, couldn't that engine have coughed, sputtered, "conked out" as so many motors do after standing idle for hours? The few seconds required to have re-started the motor would have been sufficient to have spared her life . . . It was the hour when evening traffic—indeed, when traffic, especially along the streets Miss Mitchell drove, usually begins to thicken; yet on that particular night there were no such slow-down conditions. Traffic, on the contrary, flowed rather smoothly . . . A change of traffic lights would have intervened in what was to prove a fatal meshing of events: Had a green light been red, or a red light been green, when her car approached it, Miss Mitchell undoubtedly would not have been on the precise, deadly spot at the moment when the automobile roared northward on Peachtree Street to snuff out her existence.

But nothing—not one of those little, almost unnoticeable things—happened. The deadly analogy is perfected in the harrowing description given by Mr. Marsh of his wife's last split-second movements—moments in which the vivacious, courageous "Peggy" Mitchell showed opposition, resistance—instinctive fight—to the awful peril that roared toward her. No paralyzing fear caused Miss Mitchell to cringe, hide her eyes in her hands, as many a good woman might have done. No frozen statue of terror here, as Margaret Mitchell's very last living moments saw her out almost in the middle of the Peachtree Street she had made familiar to the world—out there, her quick mind alert, striving to find a way out of the path of certain death. Even as the vehicle bore down on her, brakes shrieking, tires screaming, the little author of the Big Book fought off death —ran, darted as best she could, in an agile, intelligent effort to keep alive. In a blunt word, Margaret Mitchell saw the great enemy, Death, trying to corner her, and Margaret Mitchell wanted to live. She fought back in the only way she knew, rather than surrender to the faint-hearted defense of cringing in helpless terror. But—to indulge one final allusion to what unavoidably must bear the flavor of predestination—Fate's awful clock was ticking out the split-seconds of her life, and her escape was not to be.

John Marsh's own sad words of that horrifying scene: "It seemed that every time she took another step toward the curb to get out of the automobile's path, it swung further and further over in the same direction. In its long, curving skid, it looked like it was chasing her" until the sickening moment of the deadly impact.

(The man who gripped the steering-wheel of the automobile which struck down Margaret Mitchell was Hugh D. Gravitt, a 29-year-old Atlanta taxicab driver, off-duty and driving his own car. The official police report of the occurrence read in part: "Gravitt admitted he had been drinking some beer and there was a strong odor of alcohol on his breath. He talked irrational (sic) and was definitely under the influence of an intoxicant . . . There were 60 feet of skid marks leading up to the point of impact, seven feet after the impact." Prior to his trial, it was brought out, as a matter of Atlanta police records, that he had been arrested twenty-four times since July, 1944. All but one of the arrests were for speeding, reckless driving and other traffic offenses! A jury in Fulton County Superior Court subsequently found him guilty of involuntary manslaughter and fixed his punishment at from twelve to eighteen months' imprisonment. On the following day, Gravitt's attorneys announced they would not appeal the sentence. That same

night, Gravitt, still at liberty under his original bond, and driving the same car which struck and mortally injured Margaret Mitchell, collided with a truck, seriously injuring Gravitt's wife and hurting several other persons to a lesser degree.)

The so-called accident occurred on Peachtree Street at Thirteenth Street. Miss Mitchell had found a parking place on the west side of Peachtree south of Thirteenth. (The Peachtree Arts Theatre is on the east side of Peachtree, a few feet north of Thirteenth.) Miss Mitchell and Mr. Marsh were crossing Peachtree, on foot, from the west toward the east, on a line with the north side of Thirteenth. Gravitt and his speeding automobile were roaring north on Peachtree.

One witness, two blocks south of the point of the "accident," said that Gravitt's car went past him at 50 miles an hour. Other witnesses along the death route placed his speed at between 40 and 50 miles an hour.

"We had started across the street, in a 'hole' in the traffic," said John Marsh, "at an instant when no cars were passing either north or south. I am not as strong as I was before I had a heart attack a few years ago, and we made a practice of waiting for those 'holes' in the traffic before attempting to cross a busy street. We had almost reached the center of the street when Gravitt's car came into view. From the first instant, I knew we were in danger."

That phrase—"when Gravitt's car first came into view"—is important in gaining a picture of the "accident" and how it happened: Peachtree Street is approximately straight for some distance south of Eleventh Street and north of Twelfth Street. But between Eleventh and Twelfth Streets, Peachtree has a "kink" in it, a wide curve swinging to the east and then straightening out to the north again. A person driving north on Peachtree, as Gravitt was, does not "open up the curve," cannot see what is ahead, until he passes the Twelfth Street intersection. Nor can pedestrians crossing Peachtree at Thirteenth, as the Marshes were, see an approaching northbound automobile until it has entered the block. *That block, between Twelfth and Thirteenth, is very short.*

From the moment when Gravitt swung around the curve at 40 or 50 miles an hour (Atlanta has a 25-mile speed limit) until he had struck Miss Mitchell down, the time elapsed, according to Mr. Marsh, did not exceed five or six seconds.

"Peggy was on my left side as we crossed the street," Mr. Marsh said. "I was between her and the approaching car. That may have influenced the split-second decisions we both made, mine to go forward, hers to go back. There was no consultation between us, nor time for it. Maybe, not being able to see the car as well as I, she leaped back to get a better view of it.

"Whatever the reason, she tried to make it back to the curb we had just left. And I am confident she would have made it, if the automobile had not gone into that long, deadly skid that swung it further and further in the same direction she was going, as if it were chasing her down.

"If it had skidded toward the east side of the street instead of the west, it probably would have gotten me, not her. But it didn't have to get either one of us. This was certainly an accident that did not have to happen. If Gravitt had been driving even a little slower, both of us would have escaped. If Peggy had been given even one more second of time, I think she could have made it."

One more second! In that infinitesimal swish of a clock's second-hand, the life of Margaret Mitchell could have been saved. But that one extra second, to have been gained by only slightly less reckless driving, was not given the noted author, and the fatal blow was struck. Fate's timing was perfect and deadly. Everything was over in the first instant when the front of the automobile crushed the front of the magnificent brain of Margaret Mitchell. She experienced no suffering thereafter, doctors said. She could have recovered from all of her other injuries. Even her face, her open, girlish face, was not dirtied, nor was her hair mussed or unduly disarranged, when she was sped by ambulance to Grady Hospital, her husband riding on the front seat with the driver.

Thus died Margaret Mitchell, and the world mourned her shocking and unnecessary death. In addition to the columns of editorial shock and condolence, telegrams poured into the homes of her husband and other close relatives—messages of grief and regret from every strata of society.

Epitomizing the sad tenor of those telegraphic missives was that from the President of the United States, a copy of which follows:

WESTERN UNION
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON DC AUG 17 926A

JOHN R MARSH
1268 PIEDMONT AVE NORTHEAST ATLANTA

THE NATION TO WHICH SHE BROUGHT INTERNATIONAL FAME THROUGH A CREATIVE WORK OF LASTING MERIT SHARES THE SORROW WHICH HAS COME TO YOU WITH SUCH SUDDEN AND TRAGIC FORCE. GREAT AS AN ARTIST WHO GAVE THE WORLD AN ETERNAL BOOK, THE AUTHOR OF GONE WITH THE WIND WILL ALSO BE REMEMBERED AS A GREAT SOUL WHO EXEMPLIFIED IN HER ALL TOO BRIEF SPAN OF YEARS THE HIGHEST IDEALS OF AMERICAN WOMANHOOD

HARRY S TRUMAN

Her native Atlanta clamored for a big public funeral, at which it might pay her the tribute she so richly deserved; but Margaret Mitchell's final rites were private. Mourners were admitted by invitation. Yet the privacy of the last ceremonies was not a design on the part of the deceased's author's family to "exclude" the public as such; it was born of the intelligent realization that, so great and widespread was the affection in which Miss Mitchell was held by the rank and file of Atlanta citizens, opening the services to the general public might create a city-wide traffic jam and confusion.

As a consequence of the decision to limit the services to a basis of privacy, the magnificent main chapel at Spring Hill, on Spring Street near Tenth, was just comfortably filled. But outside the chapel for blocks a bowed and saddened throng listened to the ritual over a public address system permitted at the last moment by the family.

The funeral was among the most impressive the Georgia capital city had ever beheld. From beginning to the final word spoken over the grave of the famous novelist, the long cortege of hearse and mourners' glistening automobiles moved with dignified precision. And along the full three-mile route from chapel to the ancient hallowed precincts of Oakland Cemetery the sidewalks were lined with those who paused to bid farewell to the city's most widely beloved personage. White and colored stood in serried ranks along the older reaches of Atlanta approaching the walled-off cemetery, the hot August sun beating down upon bared heads and saddened countenances.

In the ritual at the chapel, graying Dean Raimundo de Ovies, a warm personal friend of the little woman whose broken body lay finally at peace in a magnificent metal casket, with graceful dignity spoke the simple words of the Episcopal Church's Service for the Dead. Prior to the sermon there filled the chapel the soft and sweet—seldom sad—organ selections—including the stirring chords of Bach's "Komm Susser Tod" (Come Sweet Death), the lovely "Evening Star" from "Tannhauser," Handel's gentle "Largo," and the more familiar hymn, "The Strife is O'er."

Chapel services began promptly at 10 o'clock on the morning of August 18. Through the press, Mr. Marsh personally had requested that the public make donations of money to

Grady Hospital, in memory of Miss Mitchell, instead of sending floral offerings to her funeral; yet the snow-white chapel seemed to overflow with freshly-cut flowers. The family's lone concessions in the matter of floral tribute were made in behalf of the florist's association of Atlanta and to the inmates of the great gray Federal Penitentiary on the city's outskirts. How many tedious hours within those stone and steel-barred walls Margaret Mitchell's genius had enabled the less fortunate of men to while away can never be computed. Only the beauty of the flowers that came from the burdened hearts of those men revealed the deep gratitude they wished to express for the woman whose artistry had dissolved those gray walls for many of them. The florists of the city sent as their gift an exquisite casket blanket of snow-white orchids, gardenias, carnations and delicate lilies-of-the-valley. The heavy casket was closed.

In the black-and-white vestments of his office, the grizzled Dean de Ovies read the service for the dead from the Book of Common Prayer. The entire chapel services were over in nine minutes. Then began the long procession to Oakland, wherein is situated the Mitchell family burial-lot. The old cemetery, long ago filled to capacity and closed to further tenancy except where lots acquired many years previously held gravesites, is also the burial ground for thousands of Confederate dead, known and unknown. Just over the gently sloping greensward from the Mitchell plot are row upon row of little graying headstones which mark the final bivouac of men who only a few generations ago smiled, loved, fought and were mowed down in their desperate defense of the little Atlanta of 1864. It was chiefly of these same long-dead men that Margaret Mitchell wrote her epic story, making known to the world in colorful yet grim strokes of the pen the emptiness of war's tragic loss.

And it was on this long last journey from chapel to cemetery that the sorrow and grief of a native populace became so starkly evident—in the blank, stricken countenances of everyday Atlantans, white and colored, who lined the curbstones as the cortege moved onward, onward, with seldom a stop — southward along Spring Street to Fifth, thence east to Piedmont Avenue. There, incident to a sharp southward turn, occurred the only pause in the long cavalcade. And at that precise moment, through clouds that had partially obscured the sun earlier, a shaft of brilliant light broke through to almost directly spotlight the hearse. After that came only bright sun the rest of the day.

A CITY MOURNS

It is strange, and moving, to witness an entire city choked in grief, such as was noticeable all along the funeral route that warm August morning. Many shed tears openly, others patently tried to resist them. Little knots of folk on street corners, thin groups huddled along the sidewalks; plump and scrawny housewives, overworked and cheerless, stood on shadowy front porches, looking with wide eyes and drawn cheeks at the passing-by of a woman who had given them, too, a little escape from utter dreariness . . . A tall woman with graying, straggly hair suddenly drops her worn broom as she quickly stuffs the hem of her apron into her mouth to stifle a sob. Other watchers bow their heads or shake them sadly. They, too, know full well that here is passing the tragic result of "the accident that never should have happened."

The long hearse was preceded by an honor guard of twelve motorcycle policemen, and at every intersection along the three-mile course other patrolmen, under constant radio direction, kept a clear avenue. Flags snapped at half-mast from the tower on City Hall and the dome of the State Capitol. As the cortege approached Hunter Street, a little group gathered closely high on the north side of the Capitol dome, to look far down on the last journey of a great lady.

Never had Atlanta paid more solemn tribute to one of the city's really great. An observer, an aged man, stood bent in the hot sun near the red brick portal on the Hunter Street entrance of Oakland Cemetery. "It's bigger than General Gordon's funeral," he quavered, referring to the

Confederate general and onetime Georgia Governor, John B. Gordon.

But bigness itself was not the impressive feature of the funeral of Margaret Mitchell. It was, as has been noted, the universal and unashamed sorrow and grief that lay like a bright pall all along the route of the procession. Even in the once lovely but of recent years decadent sections where poverty lay like an open wound in the dilapidated houses that were caught in the hot, bright August sun, the people paused to gaze—for many their first and last look—at anything connected with the famous woman who had opened to them the glimpses of another era and another life.

At the cemetery, a sizeable crowd had gathered somewhat in advance of the arrival of the procession. Perhaps a thousand or more persons congregated about the Mitchell family lot, which itself was not far from the western portal entrance. All, however, were orderly and remained at a respectable and considerate distance, as the bier was borne by the pallbearers to the graveside. These pallbearers were some of Margaret Mitchell's former associates and closer friends—William Plummer, Samuel Y. Tupper, Jr., Henry B. Troutman, Angus Perkerson, Wright Bryan, John W. Talley, Harold Martin and Channing Cope.

At the canopied graveside, beneath a warm and friendly sun, Dean de Ovies once again spoke briefly, uttering the tender words of committal. The silvery casket lay in a heavy metal vault, upon which in three bas relief lines were the words MARGARET MITCHELL MARSH. There, among her own family, all that was mortal of one of America's most remarkable women was lowered out of sight and into eternity.

With almost one outraged voice, the press of the nation thundered out its denunciation of a civil system that allowed to occur an "accident" of the type that placed the noted Margaret Mitchell in an untimely grave. In newspapers large and small, leading editorials spoke with bitterness of the wanton destruction of life on the streets of American cities by irresponsible drivers at the wheels of automobiles. Here and there, among this general and vicarious *vox populi* there appeared expressions steeped in the hope that Miss Mitchell's shocking death "would not be in vain."

Along this general tenor of indignation and protest, a random sampling of such editorial expression in various sections of the United States shows the following:

New Orleans Times-Picayune: It (the Margaret Mitchell tragedy) established a No. 1 traffic case for the attention of legislatures and courts throughout the land, in respect to chronic law violators.

Memphis Commercial Appeal: The untimely death of Margaret Mitchell ought to serve as a spur to public and official consciences that the streets and highways will be rid of those persons whose chronic misbehavior has transformed them into potential traffic killers.

Pittston (Pa.) Gazette: The National Safety Council, discussing the traffic accident that resulted in the death of Margaret Mitchell, says that she was "murdered by mass indifference of the public." That verdict is all too well founded on the evidence . . . Maybe the death of Margaret Mitchell will wake up the American people to their responsibility for such needless tragedies. Maybe.

Portsmouth (N. H.) Herald: Prosecution for manslaughter of the man charged with the death of Margaret Mitchell will bring little comfort to the general public, none to the family of the famous author of "Gone With the Wind." That he was driving a car while intoxicated, as authorities claim, serves to arouse public indignation.

Columbus (Miss.) Commercial Dispatch: . . . One of the most inexcusable deaths was that of Margaret Mitchell, author of "Gone With the Wind," who was run down by a drunken driver. And to make matters still worse, this driver had 23 traffic violations against him. Yet Atlanta authorities permitted this man to continue operation of a vehicle that resulted in the death of a famous woman . . .

Enid (Okla.) Eagle: Anyone's blood might boil at the recent discovery that Margaret Mitchell was killed by a driver who carried a record of twenty-three previous traffic charges. First flush of anger, of course, goes against that kind of driver. But it would be much more effective if directed against the men who let reckless driving continue . . .

Greeley (Colo.) Tribune: Grand jury at Atlanta, Ga., has indicted for involuntary manslaughter a young cab driver whose taxi (This is an error; Gravitt was driving his personal car at the time) ran over and fatally injured Margaret Mitchell, author of the monumental "Gone With the Wind." Newspapers over the United States have expressed amazement and shock because the accused cabby had been arrested 23 times for traffic violations before the fatal accident and still was allowed to drive. These commentators are either hypocritical or they don't know the facts of life. The public's tenderness toward drunken and "don't give a damn" auto drivers is well nigh universal . . . The main assurances that a pedestrian or careful driver gets from the law throughout the United States are that if he is fatally injured he will be carefully gathered up and rushed to a hospital and that when he succumbs to his injuries his battered remains will be given safe escort through traffic to the cemetery.

There is, indeed, ample room for doubting the optimistic view that Margaret Mitchell "did not die in vain"; that her tragic and wholly unnecessary death might, somehow, so arouse public indignation that adequate steps would be taken to prevent such future tragedies . . . Yes, there was some "crusading," some "tightening up." But, now, a few months later, one can find very, very little, in the official records or in a casual observation of traffic conditions, to support a belief that Atlanta's automobile drivers have become more careful, or its streets less hazardous. During the eight months since Miss Mitchell's death (September 1949 through April 1950), twenty-three people have been killed in traffic accidents on Atlanta's streets. Eleven of them, like Miss Mitchell, were pedestrians.

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